

Public Utility Committee Meeting Transcript – 11/18/2015

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>> >> Garza: Since we have a quorum I'm going to call the meeting to order. It is -- >> 3:17. >> >> Garza: 3:17 on November 18th, I call our public utilities committee meeting to order. Our first item is the approval of the minutes, I'll entertain a motion. Okay. Motion made by councilmember troxclaire, seconded by councilmember Zimmerman, all of those in favor of approving the minutes say aye. >> Aye. >> Garza: Three ayes and councilmember kitchen absent for now. The next item is citizens communication, that's for any citizen wanting to speak on anything that is not on the -- not on the agenda. So we have one speaker. Paul robins, you have three minutes. >> Good afternoon, council. I have spoken to you before about natural gas conservation programs that save little energy and do so at an outrageous cost and I'm back with the Numbers. Could you show the chart, Ms.? How to do this -- this is a paper copy. The powerpoint doesn't work. Here's a chart showing three Texas gas service conservation programs. Compared to the current cost of gas, which is on your left. And the natural gas price is about \$5, but the various conservation programs are \$12 per thousand cubic foot saved, \$20 per thousand cubic foot saved and \$102 per thousand cubic feet saved. Natural gas prices are low right now but will probably trend higher over time. Still it is not likely they will rise to the price levels in these programs. \$102 per thousand cubic feet? I might be able to drill gas

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in my back yard at lower prices. You all know that I strongly support conservation programs. For me to come here to tell you to cancel some of them, I would have to have a compelling reason. This money either needs to be spent on programs that are cost effective or the rebate needs to be reduced enormously or the money should be unspent so that it can be used as bill relief. The franchise the city holds with the gas company allows you to do this. It states in section 4.7, "The extent of the company's specific participation in conservation of natural gas shall be determined by ordinances that the council may adopt from time to time during the term of the franchise." I know you'll be drowning in water issues today, but I hope that you will put this on your agenda for the December or January meeting. Thank you. >> Zimmerman: Thanks, Paul. This is terrific but could you put on what the cost of gas was with the presumption of these Numbers? Because it changes, right, depending on the -- on the market cost of the gas? >> Well, yeah and I could get you an average of costs over time. >> Zimmerman: Maybe what would make sense is, I don't know if we can do it, maybe you're not the right person to ask. Could the city council tell the gas company to suspend, you know, this program until the price of gas rises to where it makes economic sense? >> Yes, you can. >> Zimmerman: We could tell them to do that. Would they have to listen? >> Yes, according to the section 4.7 that I just read, yes, they would have to listen. >> Zimmerman: Well, then why don't -- call my office and let's work on a resolution that would address

this and maybe set some parameters and say, you can't offer these incentives if they're going to cost us this kind of money, right?

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It's got to make more economic sense and we could give them some metrics. >> I'll do that. I -- I'll copy all of you. >> Zimmerman: Let's do that, thank you. >> Thank you. >> Garza: Is there anybody else that wanted to speak general citizens communication? If not, we'll go on to item 3, which is discussion and possible action regarding the public utilities committee meeting schedule for calendar year. Does everybody have a copy of that? >> [Indiscernible]. >> Garza: What I'm proposing, what I would propose is that we take out the March, the August, because that's around budget time and the December meeting. If that's okay -- >> Zimmerman: Why are the asterisks? Okay. This is on-- we had to change it because of holidays. >> Garza: Yeah. >> Zimmerman: Okay, so I will make a motion, I'm looking at the item here on our -- the draft, should we maybe put it on the overhead? I don't know how many people here are interested. Why don't I do that right quick. It will just take a minute. I will make a motion. [Multiple voices]. >> Chair? >> Garza: Yes. >> Troxclair: To if we adopt the schedule and we decide next year we want to have a meeting in may because we're dealing with an issue that requires more time, we can always do that, right if. >> Garza: Yes, as long as we have the proper posting time notice, we can always have a meeting. >> Zimmerman: So I would like to move that we pass the utility committee schedule amended by removing the March, August and December meetings. As marked on the overhead.

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>> Second. >> Garza: All right, moved by councilmember Zimmerman, seconded by councilmember troxclaire. All of those in favor say aye? Any opposition? That's 3 to -- 3 in favor and councilmember kitchen absent for now. Our next item is -- is item no. 4, which is a briefing and possible action, Austin water utility billing issues. I think -- >> Zimmerman: I was going to suggest, could we move quickly to item 5 and maybe wait, that will give us some time for councilmember kitchen to get back. Item 5 is the mark and locating if we could talk about that first. >> Garza: Sure. >> Zimmerman: Thank you. >> Garza: We're going to go to 5, an item councilmember Zimmerman requested possible action regarding marking and locating utility infrastructure. I don't think we have any speakers. But I think staff is going to give us a presentation. Mr. Coronado, is that -- >> Yes. >> Garza: Okay. >> Good afternoon, council, my name is Rick Coronado, Austin water assistant director over pipeline operations. We're going to go over the process did briefly for infrastructure locating and marking. So the -- so the Austin water pipeline operations

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program area has a group underneath the meter services and they provide a service of locating infrastructure for water, wastewater, reclaim services and it's a small division or area that has about six locators and a supervisor. On occasion, when the kind of workload fluctuates and increases, we'll take some of the other technicians from other program areas and also have them locate lines and utilities. In addition to that, we also have what we call a ticket management system. It's separate from our operations and maintenance database. We contract services with the korterra system and they communicate with the 811 system, so essentially all of the tickets are routed to the korterra system. And we participate in that contract, along with other departments, such as watershed and transportation department. It is a -- kind of like a web-based service, so we'll put those tickets from that

web service daily and we'll manage that through the six employees or so and up to 12 in -- in -- currently we have about 12 doing that. So just to give you a -- kind of a reference of -- >> [Indiscernible]. >> Zimmerman: If you could back up, before you go on, why do we have the two separate groups? It looks a little bit like we have two groups, right? We have a contract group and we have a full-time citigroup. >> We have a full-time citigroup. We also have additional staff that we pull from other city groups within the Freeman area to do -- within the program area to do that because of workload. So if the ticket -- if the tickets continue to increase, I'll show you a trend on that -- we definitely utilize other technicians to do that line

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locating. So this kind of gives you a representation of the last three years and really I'm going to pay attention to the total number here, so in 2012 we had over 56,000 tickets that we managed. In 13, over 64,000. In 14, 70. And just through October, we were at 77,000. So we're probably projecting to have maybe close to 100,000 tickets to manage and in those tickets we review them to see whether or not they're applicable to Austin water utilities. And if they're not, we clear them. Essentially they may be work that's performed inside the homeowners' property so they wouldn't apply to us to go mark. Over time, this may be misleading, but there's also the bar graph. I wasn't able to populate for this fiscal year, but since it's a separate database, we have to request that information. It's not integrated with our operations and maintenance database. Although we are working to mine that data in the upcoming project to essentially integrate the korterra with our maintenance management so that we can mine some of the data to actually identify how many we are marking on an annual basis. And I may come back to this graph, but this is what the 12 individuals are performing right now is about 77,000 tickets. And like I mentioned, each ticket may have multiple facilities to locate, so that one ticket may have a whole block to do and they may be multiple facilities to locate, water and wastewater, reclaim and so forth.

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>> Zimmerman: Let me just say it would be easier for me to kind of follow that if you really put the blight blue bar should object the left. The way the process works, you get a request, then you have to figure out is it something that I have to mark or not. Then you can clear it. You have to figure out if they have the request in, figure out if something that I've got to mark, then just clear it. >> Correct. The line locators will look at each individual ticket, see if it applies. I will show you a diagram of what that also looks like. The work flow or request comes into the 811 system for a one call ticket. Austin water receives the notification through the korterra ticket management system. The line locator looks at those tickets and assigns them to six geographic area within the city. The city is divided into six parts and each locator is assigned to that geographic area. If there's -- if that construction area applies to them, like I mentioned if the facilities are within that constructed area, then they'll locate. Otherwise they'll clear them administratively and we'll close out the ticket with the korterra system. So when we go and look, we'll go and paint so that's typically the marking is going to be through painting. Yes, sir? >> Zimmerman: This is exactly what I wanted to hear. This is exactly what I wanted. Thanks for bringing it. What we're going to talk about here in a minutes, just to give you context. I have in front of me a photo that we're going to put up later and it's got cleared painted on it. So there was a clearing marked on here. I guess it was something that the city recognized they needed to go do it.

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It's in their right-of-way or whatever but the marking was wrong, it showed clear when it was not clear. >> Okay. >> Zimmerman: So I guess looking at this flow chart, the city correctly said, yes, we do have some infrastructure in this area in question. The problem there was just that it was marked clear instead of there's a pipe right here. >> Okay. Well -- we'll go through that process and so in -- that would be yes, there is utilities in that construction area and we'll go out to the field and locate or mark, like you mentioned, clear that there are no utilities in the area. And I'll kind of go through some of the criteria we use to identify those utilities. So we also recognize that there are best practices out in the industry. We utilize the common ground alliance organization to help kind of shape what the sops or sogas are for our staff. This is kind of a sample of what the latest, best practices are. We can share the link to you if you need that. So some of the components that exist within that -- those best practices include, you know, looking at your available records. So as a line locator, they will go out in the field. They're -- they'll go out in the field. They are equipped with vehicles, electromagnetic instruments, they have laptops. So they'll use -- first of all, they'll probably use their records management, pull up some of the Austin water records from the field. In doing so, they will pull up something typical to this. This is what we call an intersection. The intersection kind of gives us an idea of where our mains are, what our

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valves are located, kind of a reference point of distance where to mark. And they'll use this as -- as a way to mark their utilities. In addition to that, if there's anything that they notice from any of the records that are incorrect, they'll go through a process of correcting or kind of red-lining, marking those up and sending those through our infrastructure records for updating. So the -- the three -- now I'm going down to color coding. The three main colors that we use to -- to mark our lines are going to be the blue that represents water, the green that represents wastewater, and also -- let's see -- purple that represents reclaim. On occasion we also mark white for representing construction areas that we're going to have a one call on. So if our crews need to do a one call, they'll -- they'll mark that area in white before other utilities will mark their respective utilities. I'll kind of combine both training and safety together because they kind of come together at some point. Located training, you know, I mentioned that there's -- there's a staff of six that are in transition. They just kind of came on board because of our demand from the last year. They'll have one of the key components in training is how to use maps, how to use electronic system, how to use -- obtain some of these records that you see up here. That's one key aspect. Another one could be that they have, pair up with those that are experienced in the area, I mentioned that the line locators are

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separated in six areas of town. And we do that purposely so that way the line locators are familiar with that area of town. Now, if for some reason there's increased construction activity in a certain area of couple, then we'll pair up, we'll double up an area so that way that you'll have more quality line locates and you'll have additional training because you'll pair up two folks. Whenever we have construction going on where it involves a lot of line locating, we will also communicate with the contractor that's -- that's in there to kind of get a plan of action. Are you going to just, you know, we'll locate for the next 14 days and then definitely come back and relocate additional area if they're going to be there for a while. In addition to training, we also look at the aspects of safety for our folks. They do a lot of traveling. There's issues with traffic controls, so we'll set up some training aspects on that aspect as well. Another best practice involves visual inspections. So visual inspections means I see a manhole in the area, I see a water meter, a hydrant, there's a cleanout, those are visual markers for our line locators to mark and in some cases there are no visual markers and we rely heavily on some of the as-built drawings. In addition

to that, we definitely mark consistently, meaning that we have to make sure that we're marking the right color coding go in that area. And I mentioned, also, a tool that we use, it's

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electromagnetic tool, essentially we tie on to the line, we have a transmitter that's -- that emits a signal and we kind of use that device to locate metallic pipe. Unfortunately, a lot of our assets underground are not metallic, so there's a lot of pipes that fall in the category that are hard to locate with -- that are hard to locate with other tools. So I have kind of briefly gone over some of the best practices and at this point I'm open for any questions that you might have in regard to the process. >> Zimmerman: Thanks, I appreciate that. So the case that kind of got me interested in this was I had a constituent over on Hickfair, maybe we can put that photograph up if you've got it. I was trying to figure out was it our Austin city employees or did we have a contractor that went out? You can kind of see the green clear. I guess the green is because it was a wastewater line that we were concerned with and that's why it's painted green instead of -- >> Correct. So Austin water will locate for all of our utilities, water, wastewater and reclaim. >> It is our city staff -- >> That's the same staff that I mentioned earlier. So that would be yes. In this instance, I see clear and I also see in the construction zone it's clear. I believe in this case you had records where it indicated there wasn't a service here, but other records may have also indicated there was a service. So we've gone back and done -- kind of gone through that correction process to say we're marking this area to have a service line. There also was no cleanout at this location. I mentioned about visual markers. So if we had seen a visual cleanout, that would have been an indication that there's also a service line

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here. >> Zimmerman: So one of the issues, I believe, this used to be a municipal utility district. That's been a pretty common thing for muni to set up the water and wastewater and then later the city comes in and annexes the property. So those records of where all of that infrastructure is, those records ought to be conveyed from the -- you know, from the M.U.D. District and it would go over to the city. But -- but you don't really have a way to know what the accuracy of those records are. But if you annex the property, it seems like the city assumes, you know, responsibility and the liability that would be a part of annexation, right? >> Yeah, I wasn't aware this might be a M.U.D. Area or a former M.U.D., but that would be the process that we would get all of those records released to us if they were in addition to what we already had. But you are correct that -- that we don't really have a clear -- sense of accuracy of whether or not those records actually reflect what's out in the field. We rely, if there's any changes -- if we were to repair this, we would have to update those records if we found that to be the case. >> Zimmerman: So then -- as far as my constituents are concerned, you can see the telephone pole that was replaced here kind of on the upper left side. It's marked tnd. And this was the pedernales electric co-op that needed to put this telephone pole in here. And so when they started drilling, they hired a contractor, right, to put the new wooden pole in and when they started digging, they hit the line that wasn't supposed to be there. This caused the sewage to backup and my constituents -- in my constituent's home, which was kind of an emergency and a big problem, they were really unhappy that - that -- it was an emergency for them, right, when you have raw sewage in your

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house. >> Correct. >> Zimmerman: And they got nothing from 311. You know, that was just -- so I went over and inspected weeks after the accident. And I was told on the telephone from somebody at the

Austin city that well, it's not our liability, not our responsibility. You know, we're a city government, we're immune from damages or something to that effect. And that's why I asked you to come and talk about this. So -- can you tell me what the city policy is if a mistake is made and somebody hits a pipe that wasn't supposed to be there, what is the city policy in this situation? >> Well, I think this -- went through the practice of going through the claims process and so I think that's what you are referring to about the liability. As far as practice, if somebody hits the utility, the utilities, we typically get notified by a contractor. In this case, we got notified by the customer. And so that was a delay in response as well. So on a -- on a typical scenario, if the contractor would hit our utilities and notify us, we would respond within an hour, repair the work, and then that would probably be the end of that process. In this case, because there was a delay in response, I think that was the -- the additional damage, if the customer comes back and find water in the -- in the home, then they'll kind of want to know where that came from. We would respond -- not just 311, but we have a direct number for emergencies. If there was water standing in the area, especially in

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the homeowner, we would essentially use one of our contracts to extract the water from the home. So we have a contract that we utilize that we assist customers if there's essentially a health/safety issue in their home. That's our process right now. >> Zimmerman: Well, I -- I know they -- people don't know this, of course, when sewage starts backing up in your house, you don't know what the protocol is. I think what they did was called 311 and asked for help, what do I do, how do I get assistance, what I know from the constituent is they just said their phone calls weren't returned. They didn't get clear information on what to do, they were kind of un-- >> [Multiple voices] Process where 311, typically if it's water and wastewater emergency, they will turn it over to water Austin dispatch. >> Zimmerman: These are not dumb people, they would follow instructions. If 311 told them to call water and wastewater, I'm sure they would do it because they had an emergency. >> I think they would just transfer it to water and wastewater. They won't have them call another number. We get those transfers to dispatch. >> Zimmerman: Sounds to me like you do have a process for some reason that's -- that's broken down. I mean, I don't -- it wouldn't -- would it matter whether the contractor that drilled the hole, you know, the contractor that's boring the hole, whether they call and report an emergency or whether the homeowner calls to report the emergency? >> It wouldn't matter. >> Zimmerman: It shouldn't matter. >> It wouldn't matter. We get both calls directly from the customer or from 311 or the contractor themselves. >> Zimmerman: Then I think based on what we've heard, I see what your -- how your process works, I know what to do to pursue this farther and see how the ball got dropped. I think that I know what to do now. Who would I talk to? Do you have somebody that answers legal questions in terms of, you know, liability, if the process is

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not followed? To repair the damage or to do mitigation, is there an attorney that could talk to me about that from, you know, the water and wastewater division? >> Well, that -- the law department. >> Zimmerman: City law department, there's not an attorney at the awu? It's just the centralized -- city legal department? >> Meghan, do you want to speak on that? >> Zimmerman: I thought some of our enterprise divisions had legal help on their own. >> Councilmember Zimmerman if you are asking questions related to what the city's liability is when you are addressing infrastructure owned by the water utility or otherwise, certainly we can answer specific questions you might have. That's really one of the roles that our claims division plays. >> Zimmerman: Could I ask that we put that on our next executive session? Are we going to be back Tuesday of next week, is that right, for a work session? >>

For the -- for the full council? >> Zimmerman: I guess it's longer than that. Whenever we have our next opportunity, I would like to put an item in to talk about these particular issues. >> We can certainly do that. We have briefed prior councils on liability in the context of infrastructure. >> Zimmerman: Good, thanks. >> Garza: Anybody else have questions? No? Thank you. That leads us to our last item. 4. It's a briefing and possible action -- sorry I just ate some ice and my tongue is numb now. We have two speakers. So -- so Barbara -- I don't want to butcher your last name. I've addressed you before, Barbara Sally, Lost Creek. Our president could not be here today, Madeleine

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Connor. After wastewater commission -- I had the pleasure of meeting with Greg Meszaros, I found him charming, witty, we have a Irish-Hungarian heritage. He's very funny today. What I do not find funny or charming are his repeated misstatements to the public utilities committee and to other governmental bodies. Let me give you just four examples. First, Mr. Meszaros said that Austin residential customers can only water on Saturdays and -- only water on Saturdays and Sundays. He said repeatedly that Lost Creek customers had never had tiered rates before. He's answered pointed questions about Lost Creek with river place data. And I hope that you recall the slide from last time that had the data from 20 irrigation -- 20 irrigation audits on 20 different homes. Mr. Meszaros used that data to paint a pretty compelling picture. He said: Look at this home, they are using 100,000 gallons a month. Look at this one, they are watering like seven days a week. He said many of these are from Lost Creek. Well, you know, I doubted that. So I asked for the data with the addresses attached. And not a single one was from Lost Creek. Not a single one of the 20. Now, your job is to make recommendations to council. To full council. But your recommendations are only as good as the data that you are given from Austin water staff. So I ask that you hold Greg Meszaros accountable and make him give you correct data. Now no doubt he'll address some of these misstatements again today. But I'm tired of after the fact corrections when I draw his attention to something wrong or when you do. He needs to give you correct data at the outset. We've lost trust in Austin water. That's why we're supporting a full external audit.

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Now we're being told that Austin water doesn't even track complaint resolutions, ridiculous. And then we were just told that Austin water responds more quickly if a contractor calls. That is not supposed to happen that way, he just said well it's an hour if the contractor calls. I'm going to give you just one story from the 200 complaints that we received. Carol, my neighbor, did the correct thing. She complained to Austin water, she had three years of historical data. She showed that her August bill was four times as high as Normal. Only two of them living there. No pool. No irrigation system. No leak. Her bill went right down again. Did Austin water take her seriously? No. I'm telling our residents, if you want to show catch up billing, you're going to have to take a dated snapshot every month of your meter and I hate having to tell them that. That's ridiculous. To have to go out and lift that meter cover every month. Beyond that, Austin water's newest trick is to change our meter read dates every -- I've had mine changed four times in the last six months. You find out your meter read date when your next bill comes. [Buzzer sounding]. So thank you for your help. For too long the city of Austin staff has been the tail wagging the dog, happy to take those general revenue transfer checks. You have signaled you are a different city council and you're going to ask these awkward questions. Thank you. >> Garza: Thank you. Madeleine Connor. >> Zimmerman: She's not here. >> Garza: She's not here. Okay. >> I just stated that president Madeleine Connor of the neighborhood association could not be here today and she regrets that. >> Garza: Okay, thank. >> I will be taking any questions on behalf of the neighborhood association, if you have any. >>

Garza: Does anybody have any questions? >> Zimmerman: This is the lost creek area. >> Garza: Mr. Meszaros, I believe that you were going to provide an update?

[3:52:17 PM]

>> Good afternoon, Greg Meszaros with Austin water. Here with our staff today to continue to answer questions to the council on this. I don't have any prepared slides today. I just have a few updates on some items. One, we had discussion last week about audit activities with the high bill concerns. Austin energy continues to work through their process of selecting a firm for doing a billing system audit. I'm sure y'all recall from the last session there was discussion about a meter reading audit and Austin water has gone through and a meter expertise firm to perform a meter reading audit. We issued that statement of work and opened bids on it this week. And are in the process of making an award and we would hope to have that audit and that contractor under contract in the next couple of weeks. I think we would look towards the December public utilities committee meeting of having some preliminary results from both of those audits. And then final results or more complete results in January. It will depend on how fast we can get the firms under contract and how fast they can do some of the field work, particularly with the holiday week here. But I am hopeful that we will have at least some preliminary results from those audit activities for you in December. Use continues to decline as we move into the fall months and get here with a little more rainy weather, our average pumpage declined markedly and we're down to about 115 mgd average, a million gallons per day average and dropping. Continue to work with customers at several levels. I and staff have been attending various neighborhood meetings and meeting with customers in those kind of forums. Continuing the process of

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bill reviews, answering phone calls and he is escalations although call volumes have been continually dropping. We continue to do irrigation audits at customer requests. We have completed over 250 and have approximately 126 scheduled through the first few weeks of December. I did include in your packet some background material on rate design and financial policies, a series of recommendations that were crafted over the last few years with the utility and some -- some board and commission and task force appointees from the council. So it just gives you a little more background on Austin water's rate design and its blocks and how it came up with the intervals for setting the blocks and other financial goals and policies that underlie some of our billing and rates, particularly for residential customers. So just gives you, I think, a good snapshot of -- of what -- this has been adopted by council on some of their policies with regards to how we are moving forward on these things. So really that concludes some of the comments I have and we would be happy to answer whatever questions that you would like. >> Garza: Thank you for continuing to -- >> Troxclair: Thank you for continuing to work with the neighborhoods and our constituents who are having issues. I know that you attended a neighborhood association meeting off of Brodie on Thursday when I couldn't be there, but I sent my staff and I know that you were present at well. So I appreciate you continuing to be willing to engage with the constituents, even if we feel like we're still not seeing eye-to-eye, thank you for doing that. I'm happy to hear that you're moving forward with the external audit on the meter reading. So thank you for doing that. I thought that you were going to come back to us

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with cost estimates and it was going to be a whole process of us recommending that to council. But sounds like you decided to go ahead and move forward with that. >> Yes, and Austin water is going to be

the contracting agency for the meter reading audit. Because ae provides that service to us, you know, we didn't -- we thought it would be cleaner to have us do the audit, a little more remote from them. Ae is doing the billing audit on their side and we are doing the meter reading audit. >> When you say that you are doing the audit, you are contracting with -- >> With an outside party, yeah. I just mean we're the one that issued the contract is what I mean. >> Troxclair: Okay. Whereas ae issued the contract for the billing audit. >> Yes. >> Troxclair: Okay. Well, thank you for doing that, I really appreciate it. I know that there will be a lot of people who will be interested in those results. But I did want to ask you about the audit that was done in September of last year. It came to my attention recently and I saw that it mentioned a lot of the same issues that we're talking about, you know, today. So -- so do you recall the audit that was done last September on meter reading and some other Austin water related issues? >> I do. Ae was the primary respondent to that audit and probably would need them to address specific questions that you may have. >> Troxclair: Okay. Let me -- for those who haven't seen it let me just mention a couple of points that really stuck out to me. I provided a copy to other members of the committee as well. But the audit found that ae does not have a process to determine if water reads are accurate. That the process results in approximately 91% of reads being billed to customers without review. Ae's process for reviewing those reads does not accept -- still may not ensure customer bills are accurate. It does not proactively address issues related to small meters, which

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represent the majority of meters. And that the average use is about 8,000 gallons of water per month and using the existing parameters, the -- the expected range was established between 2,000 and 32,000 gallons each month and as a result a 24,000-gallon increase in usage within one billing period would be automatically I will billed to the customer without additional review by ae billing. In this scenario the average customer's water bill would increase from \$40 to over \$300. When I was reading through this, it just seemed like there were a lot of the same topics that we were discussing currently and so I wanted to follow up and see if the issues had been addressed. There were some recommendations that were made at the end of the audit that talked about ae starting a pilot program, with water meter verification that would be completed at the end of 2014 and so I'm curious what steps ae has done since then to address some of these issues. >> Alain with agency. Austin energy dealt with five out of the six recommendations because there was one with regard to small meter exchange and I believe that was turned over to water. With regard to review of the bills, we have 230-meters that were manually read for water so you have a large funnel of ones coming into the system and we look for outliers. So we do not review every one that comes in, we set parameters and review down from there. So the first line of defense is the meter reader entering a read and if it's too high or low based on parameters programmed into the

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hand-helds it may prompt the meter reader to prompt the read. The second would be through our billing process. The the majority of our bills just generated even though we don't review every read that comes in, I think even on the flip side some of the errors we've talked about, our percentage rate of errors are very, very low. So the second is high-low through billing and it will look for reads that are maybe four times what they were previously. It's flagging higher or lower. Flagging saying they're wrong, someone needs to look at this. Maybe you need a reread or if we look and see historically there are peaks and valleys and patterns and it latches we allow the bill to go through. After the audit we implement a third bill check so we look at each customer's meter segment for water and electric and the system kicks out anything, and I apologize, but I don't know the parameters right off the bat. I think it's

two or three times higher where the bill was historically and so that will also say hey, you need to look at this, this is higher than Normal. It's a funnel process to catch outliers. >> Troxclair: Sorry, before you go on, on the topic of parameters, the caught basically said -- the audit basically said that the parameters were too wide so a bill -- a customer who normally receives a 40-dollar bill could receive a 300-dollar bill and even that huge swing wouldn't have been triggered within the current parameters. So the recommendation said that the parameters would be review and revised if necessary. So were the parameter revised? >> We have established a team that has come together and looked at the parameters and how the parameters were built into the billing system and have had some discoveries. Parameters were put in for electric and water and we all know there can be great swings in water, even outside of these issues, a

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customer in winter use of 8,000 gallons and in the summer with irrigation and have more people there it could go up to 20, 30,000. So it could go up four times and that's a valid bill. So we have established this team that came together, they looked at how we can maybe separate electric and water, and these discussions are still ongoing. Separate electric and water and potentially separate water than more just on an annual basis, maybe two times a year to adjust on seasonality, but we have to do some research on what amount of bill exceptions that generates because if we set the parameters too tight and have hundreds and thousands of bill exceptions we can't get the customers their bill. So we just need to look at those Numbers. >> Troxclair: So this said the first review would be completed by June 30th of 2015. >> Yes. So we've had the first review. We've had benchmarking from other utilities that use our billing system and there are other utilities that use three times or four times and some of the smaller utilities use two times. So that was part of the efforts to look at that. And also as a follow-up I believe the office of the city auditor will be circling back around in the next few months to do a follow-up on these recommendations to audit those. >> Troxclair: So do you expect a final decision or a final report to come out of those meetings? And if so when can we expect that if you are going to -- either finding that you -- there are no changes necessary or finding that you plan to change the parameters? >> I think we could do that and I'd like to coordinate that with office of the city auditor and see if that's something they want to do from what we've implemented from the recommendations from this last audit. >> Troxclair: Okay. So you don't plan on making -- on making any recommendations unless the auditor asks you for it? >> No. We're continuing to meet and yes, we definitely need to continue to look at that. And if -- you know, you're requesting a report back on what other utilities do and what our plan is we'll

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certainly provide that, yes. >> Troxclair: I think it would be good to know since you're going that work to follow up. Do you have any idea when we could expect when you would be done with those talks? >> I need to circle back around to the team and see the progress. And put that with the comparables of anything that the city audit may want. >> Troxclair: And I think I interrupted you on any changes you made in response to the audit. >> And another audit I believe was the quality assurance of the meter reads from the vendor. And if you'll notice in the audit report they've reviewed a certain number of reads out of 1300. I think they found three errors and it was error rate of .02 of one% on the water meter reads. So if you look through that part they reviewed -- they did the same process that we did internally. They followed meter readers and reread meters so the error rate was extremely low in that audit. And coming from that we have instituted the vendor quality assurance, which is the Numbers we've given to you where we select a certain number of meters and read after the fact either that day or very close to the next day and ensure that we're able to obtain a read and that that read was in line. >>

Troxclair: Okay. So this speaks to a pilot program. This is the response from Austin energy to the audit recommendations. It says working with our third-party meter read vendor on a water meter read verification pilot program. So -- and that pilot program would be complete at the end of 2014. So did that happen? >> Yes. So we instituted the vendor quality assurance before the end of -- I think it was 2014, if that was the finding date. We have provided responses back to the city auditors on each of those recommendations with our status. >> Troxclair: Okay. Is there -- can you provide the response to this committee as well? >> Yes. >> Troxclair: Great.

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>> Kitchen: I think you may have answered this, I'm just wanting to make sure. So this audit had a -- sort of a work plan with recommendations and the action steps and that sort of thing. Did I hear you right that the status of each of those work steps could be something that you could give us? >> Yes. >> Yes, this is Carey Overton with Austin energy. I wanted to clarify that. The way the process works for all the departments, including ours in responding to the city auditor's office not only do we respond to them within weeks of them finishing the audit, what we would do with the plan, I believe that there's an every six-month follow-up and we formally submit back to them the status of where we are on the project. So of the five or six items that you name -- again, we don't have that report in front of us. All of those items have been closed out other than the one that the vice-president had mentioned in terms of trying to find the right range variation, whether it's two to three times the amount. Those have already been responded to in writing and we'll make sure each councilmember gets a copy of what we responded to the auditor's office on. >> Kitchen: Okay. And my second question would be about the review process that you're about to start with regard to the -- the rfp for the review of the water meters. Is that scope different? How is that scope different than this report that was done? >> Greg from water is going to handle that. >> They did that with internal staff so we'll do it with an external contractor. And it's arm's length from ae. Instead of ae staff doing it it's going to be this contractor doing it, managed through the contract that we issued. You know, it's going to be a check of the meter reading predominantly. We're going to start off

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with a thousand meter reading checks. And independent of korex. And then we'll be able to have individual checks that we may want to do, additional checks of other routes, if we find problems, we'll get some feedback. They're going to document site conditions and other kind of activities. We also have some services if necessary where we could do meter accuracy testing. We have a meter accuracy bench they could witness our bench testing, if necessary. So that's -- it's some similar things, but it's going to be, you know, separate and a little -- I think a little more arm's length and through an outside contract. >> Kitchen: Do you know if the scope of the sampling will be bigger or broader? >> I don't know how many they did. >> I think it was 1600-meters. [Inaudible]. >> So it will be around that amount. We'll do a thousand and then we'll do another round. If we see a particular problem or we want more insights into something we could target them in a certain way or certain type of customer area. We kind of want to do this initial kind of round and then see where we go from there. >> Kitchen: Okay. I see the value of it. I'm just wanting to make sure that we're not just repeating what was done before, that we're taking it to the next step in terms of the scope of it. Thank you. >> Zimmerman: Director Meszaros, I had a very quick follow-up question here. We had a discussion about the green slopes. They did finally find an open pipe. Looked like it was to atmospheric pressure and water was running out like crazy. We talked about a wastewater adjustment for green slopes. Is there any update on that? >> Yes, we did issue a credit for them. >> Zimmerman: How much was it? >> Eight thousand dollars. Approximately nine thousand

dollars. >> Zimmerman: About nine thousand dollars. Okay. I didn't see that -- was

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that in my backup material? >> No. I don't know if that made it in there. Sorry. >> Zimmerman: No problem. >> I would note too that we have been monitoring their use and they've repaired that leak and it's returned to their historic Normal levels. >> Zimmerman: Terrific. >> Troxclair: Director Meszaros, and maybe this is for ae staff, I'm curious because it was brought to my attention this week and I was surprised it hadn't been brought up to our staff before now since we're talking about the same issues. Is there a reason why this maybe wasn't mentioned before when we said hey, we think there might be some issues with meter reading or there might be some issues with not identifying leaks in a timely manner. It seems like this would have been really helpful information for us to have. Because part of the reason myself and other members of the committee asked for an external audit, number one is because I think having an external audit allows the community to trust the results of the audit a little bit better if it's done internally, but also I was unaware that this information was available. >> The only response I can give to that is when we actually made the first presentation in conjunction with the director of water, we mentioned in our slides to ae that there was an audit done. We didn't probably refer to it as a third-party, we referred to it as the city auditor's office had conducted an audit of our billing process, meter reading process. >> Troxclair: Okay. I guess I just have -- did you have a question about that? I just have two more questions. One of the recommendations also spoke to the timely identification of leaks. Basically said that we weren't -- that leaks were not being identified in a timely manner. And it seems like that is still the case with the situation that we have before us now because there have been so many people who have found leaks on their property. And it seems interesting

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that these leaks would all be found at the same time and all be happening at the same time. And I think probably the reason is there was just a heightened awareness of the high water bills so people were taking a double -- were looking again at their water bills and then calling the city and then that prompted them to find out that there were leaks on some of these people's properties. So what has been done to address that finding? >> I believe it was the end of December, Austin energy and Austin water finalized a process. It's part of the rue process, but after the second reread, if it continues to come back high and beyond Normal usage, we actually do -- Austin energy now does a leak check of the property to see if they can determine that there's a leak. So that's a process that requires looking at the meter to determine if water appears to be running [indiscernible]. Nine times out of 10 that will knock out no, there's not a leak or yes, there appears to be evidence of a leak. And at that point we'll send -- since it's causing the meter to react we send a letter to the customer notifying them. And I think since the beginning of August we've sent 123 letters. I'd have to look at the total since January. We send a notification to the customer letting them know there appears to be a leak on their side of the property. We also look to see if there appears to be a leak at the meter and then we send that information over to Austin water to determine if the leak is on the customer side or on the city's side. >> Troxclair: So is that process different than the process last year? >> Yes, it is. So we didn't have proactive notification of the customer to let them know that it was kind of dependent on them to contact us and say I'm continuing to see high water usage so we've tried to get out in front of it by

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sending that notification. Also there's better communication between Austin energy field staff and

Austin water with regard to us, you know, trying to triage the situation and if the customer needs to be notified or if Austin water needs to be brought in. >> Troxclair: Okay. And I guess my last question for now was I think at the last meeting we also talked about the -- maybe coming forward with some potential policy changes that would allow for some kind of safety net. When people have a huge spike in their bill to prevent this from really happening again. If it's a one-time situation, someone who is otherwise a conservative water user who gets an 80-dollar water bill, all of a sudden gets a thousand dollar water bill that there would be some kind of one-time protection for those customers. Is there any -- I was hoping there would be some suggestions today of maybe things we could do to provide a cushion or a cap or contemplate our options for changing the policy. >> We can brainstorm and -- I mean, I don't know. We did some research and the background material on our rate tiers, I mean, I know of no material that has inclining block tiers and when you get to really high use you decline the block and I don't think that's maybe what you're saying. The only thing -- I suppose the council could pass a policy that if your water use is a ratio above historic use you bill at a different rate. That's a lot to sort through with that. There are seasonality issues. If you have a wet year one year and a dry year the next year, if the same family has changed, they're no longer living in that home, there would be a lot with that. I don't know of any utility

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that kind of bills like or does that on a ratio perspective. I mean, councilmember, I probably don't have a good answer for you there in that regard. I will say a couple of things. We're planning a cost of service update about every five to seven years we redo our cost of service and we're in that window. We'll be having a procurement for cost of service consultant and a residential rate advocate, and as a part of that cost of service typically includes a review of rate design, and so we would probably look at water and wastewater rate design issues. You're kind of into that preference of society, you know, our rates have changed considerably over the last seven to eight years and gotten where it's a much stronger pricing signal for higher water users. Just a few years ago we didn't have a fifth block, for example, and the block intervals were a lot different. You didn't hit the upper blocks until you got into even higher water use. That's come down based on recommendations from various boards and commissions, the utility and the council. I mean, we could revisit those issues, but it's a yin and a yang. As you change upper blocks it may affect the lower blocks. >> Troxclair: I'm not necessarily talking about changing the blocks, although I do think that the council should have a little bit broader conversation about our water policy in general and if our tiers are set at the right rates and if they're working as intend and if we support the continuation of the transfer to the general revenue, but my question that I'm asking here is really more narrow. I really want to know -- I would like to have some recommendations from you since you're the expert and you know more about this than I do, of what we could do for -- like I said at the last meeting, I don't think

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the point of the tiered rate structure was to punish a senior citizen living alone with a high bill. She didn't think she used as much water but the water utility says it was a high month, I don't think that was the purpose of the rate structure. From my understanding the purpose of the aggressively tiered rate structure that we have is to encourage conservation. And I feel like the customers who have called our offices in the recent months, yes, some of them did have leaks, and yes, some of them probably use more water than they expected, but I still think there's a third category of people who received huge bills that truly did not expect or plan or agree with the amount of water use that is reflected in those bills. And so of course they're going to make any changes that they can going forward to make sure that

that doesn't happen again but it really breaks my heart when I talk to an elderly woman who is going to be on a payment plan for the next year because piece she's on a fixed income and she can't afford to pay her water bill. I don't think that that was the intention of the tiered rate structure. So I'm not talking about entirely changing the structure, although that could be a different conversation that we had, I'm talking about what I think of as a safety net in kind of these outlier situations that hopefully only happen -- well, they hopefully never happen, but for when they do happen that there is some kind of safety net to catch these people and to say, you know, yeah, you received a water bill that's 500 times more than what you ever received. And we understand that you probably won't be able to pay that and you probably did not realize that you were using that much water or you might not have used that much water and there

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was a miscommunication somewhere and we're going to either cap it or we're going provide a cushion or do some kind of reduction. I think that there are probably a lot of different options of the way to approach that issue and I don't want to approach it in a way that drastically affects the rates for all of Austin, I just want to know what our options are if they want to explore a safety net. Does that make sense? >> I think so. It will involve the law department. As law communicated, there's limits to retroactively changing -- I don't know if I'm an expert in this area, to be honest with you. This is -- I'll give it some consideration, we'll talk to the staff, but I think in the end you kind of have -- you have a meter and water that passes through the meter, how can the utility determine which water passed through the meter and should be billed versus which are water passed through the meter and the customer didn't mean for that to happen? How do you avoid being arbitrary and capricious about those approaches? Do you want to put the staff in a position where they're making value judgments on what water use was okay and what wasn't? >> Troxclair: But I think that there's a way to do it where we wouldn't require -- require the staff to make judgment. I think that it could be -- if you receive a bill that's outside the range that we've established -- I guess the current parameters are 2,000 to 32,000. I mean, the ranges that -- the parameters that we just talked about that if you have never been outside of that range within the last two years and you are now 500 times -- your bill is now 500 times -- five times what it normally is, we're going to cap it at that 3,200,000-gallon level or something. I don't know -- that's what I'm saying, I was hoping

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that -- I thought we had talked about this last meeting and I was hoping we could think of some options because I'm not trying to ask you to make a value judgment but I think a one-time cap. And okay, maybe it was -- maybe it was a mistake. Maybe it was someone who was using -- purposely using more water and would take advantage of the system, but they would only get to do it one time in a period of a certain number of years. So hopefully we would catch more of the mistakes than we would have people taking advantage of the system. >> Garza: I don't know. Maybe a suggestion would be an item that you could sponsor and directs the city manager to do -- that would be a possible way to get that. >> Kitchen: Yeah. One way to come at is it the bill that you charge, but another way to come at it is a reduction in that bill or a discount off of that bill or an eligibility for subsidy for that bill or, you know, you could come at it either way. >> Troxclair: Or some kind of, you know, customer assistance like -- I don't know. I guess we can talk about it more. I'm happy to sponsor a resolution and ask the city manager to come up with options or -- if you're willing to work with me you could just come up with options and then maybe the two of us could talk about what might the best option be and I could bring that to council. That might be the quickest way. >> Let us doodle on it a little more. >> Troxclair: Okay. Thank you. >> Zimmerman: I've

got a couple of quick questions here. The backup material has got some good information about what happened back in 2012. I think 2012 was a time that we took a pretty hard look and revised the tiered billing structure, 2012 is kind of a big year for that. That was also the year we put in the drought contingency plan, in 2012, stage 1, stage 2. >> From a rate perspective? >> Zimmerman: Well, both a rate perspective, but also

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the stage 1 and stage 2 restrictions, the drought measures, they were put in in 2012, right? >> We've always had a drought contingency plan. We may have revised it. >> Zimmerman: The last major revision was August of 2012, wasn't it. >> I don't recall the last major revision. It's about every five years. But we did go through on the rate side, as we went deeper through the drought, as we were experiencing significant volatility in our revenues, we did -- we, the council, impaneled a joint financial subcommittee and they met for almost two years and issued a series of recommendations. You know, we facilitated that along with them and there's still a website and everything available for that. I think that's the material that's in your backup material. >> Zimmerman: It is, and that's my next question because I want everybody -- I didn't realize this, but the joint committee had seven members. I guess that goes with the seven former councilmembers. And it was Fishbeck, Bailey, Kelly, kid well, Rogers [indiscernible]. >> It was a combination of members from three different boards and commissions that came together and council -- >> Zimmerman: So where are we on that now? We have a new 10-1, so was this more like a task force? It wasn't a standing committee? >> It was a specially charged task force. This called it a joint financial subcommittee. >> Zimmerman: Where does that leave us now? We're talking about future agenda items we're going to put on so I think we need to review the tiered structures and the stage 1 and stage 2 restrictions because we're now over 1.5 million-acre feet in the Lakes and we're in this el Nino season. So I studied that 2012 drought contingency plan pretty carefully and we should be out of stage 1 restrictions right now,

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according to the plan, because we're way above the 1.4 million that triggers stage 1. We've been out of it for more than four months and the prospects in the future, we're going into, you know, low usage months in the winter, we're getting lots of rain, so we should be out and we're not out of the stage 2 restrictions. So that's a problem for me and I want to ask my colleagues to put this on for another agenda item so that this committee takes a look at that policy. >> We had a briefing and a discussion on that a couple of p.u.c.'s ago and we are involved in a public input process right now where we have a plan where we're working to go to every council district and electronic surveys and other things to get input. We still are in one day per week watering and I am still recommending that we stay in one day per week watering and we consider that as maybe a permanent change, but I think we're still through that process. In the end it will be if we permanently modify the drought contingency plan it will be the council's authority to change that or not. That's ultimately coming back to your doorstep. >> Zimmerman: Okay. That's great, but speaking from district 6 and I think a lot of the district members have a couple of things to say to you directly, the water bills are too high, the one day per week watering is really not reasonable. And a lot of the heartburn that's come up has been the tiered structures are really very, very high. We think they're too high. That's the feedback from my district. So anyway, let's -- I want to ask my colleagues if we could put this on maybe a January meeting where we take a look at this, not some committee. But I think it's important enough that we look at it directly. >> From a public input process too, I would add the water and wastewater commission meets every month and you all have appointees there and as I also mentioned we'll start the cost of service process in 2016

and that's going to have a committee, a citizen committee representing all the different rate classes. And so that's another opportunity to look at rate design through that process

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too, in addition to anything you want to do as a council. >> Troxclair: Since we're talking about the public input process, I just thought I would take the opportunity to say in addition to considering the stage 1 or stage 2 decision, I would also love for y'all to consider more flexibility in some of the other restrictions, like offering a choice of day for watering, allowing people to wash their cars in their driveways and things like that, that maybe are outside the specific decision of stage 1 or stage 2. Or the number of times a week you can water, but still might provide some people with flexibility of how they choose to use their water. >> That's our plan, councilmembers, to visit all of those aspects, not just the irrigation schedule. >> Garza: Anybody else have any questions? Or any motions they would like to make? >> Troxclair: We're having a December meeting? So are -- I know that director Meszaros said that you expect to hopefully have some preliminary data. I would be interested in talking about the results of the audit when they come back, whether that's December or January, the audits, I guess plural. >> Garza: Is there -- an idea of when that -- would it be as quick as four weeks? >> We have our introductory meeting for the billing audit next week and so it would be four weeks from that. Then you have the Thanksgiving holiday so we're kind of iffy. I don't know if we'll have it by mid December, but definitely by January. >> Garza: I think you could speak to the next item, that is future agenda items. >> Troxclair: Yeah. I don't know that it's appropriate to make a motion before we have that data and then I'm going to work separately on an item for the safety net. >> Garza: Okay.

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Thank you. And I look forward to that audit. Presentation. The last item is item 6, and that's discussion of future agenda items. Because of the last flooding event, which mostly affected my district, I posted on the council bulletin board possibly getting an update from the buyout office. Maybe monthly just to see how these buyouts are coming along and see if there's anything we can do to help speed them up. So that would be a suggestion. >> Kitchen: When? >> Garza: January. >> Kitchen: I would like to add -- >> Garza: Or December. >> Kitchen: I would like to add an update on the study of upper onion creek so we can -- that study has to occur before we're aware of what the options might be for the onion creek -- the upper onion creek neighborhood. >> Garza: So it's already done? >> Kitchen: They're in the process of an engineering study. Because that's an area that has not been approved for buyouts, but they had significant damage so the process that the staff has been following over the years is to first see if there's some technical fix, and if not then go to the buyout option. So they're in the middle of assessing the technical fix, but it's been going on for awhile and I think it will it would be good to stay abreast of it. >> Zimmerman: So just a note, I think the watershed has come to open space before, haven't they? I think that's where they've been bringing that information. Because we got some of that. Didn't we get some of that at open space committee? I'm pretty sure we did. >> Kitchen: I don't know. I'm not on open space. >> Zimmerman: Let's just not duplicate. >> Kitchen: No, I agree. >> Zimmerman: If you want to bring it here, I'd be fine with that. >> Garza: I also had a suggestion about a lot of our -- a lot of issue with, for example, the ads is going to be impervious cover, so I thought a briefing on the general

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feeling of does increased impervious cover create, you know, more flooding? So I thought a briefing on that would be good. >> Kitchen: That would be helpful. It's the whole infill development and the fact

that our infrastructure in some places is not up to speed. So we need to have a briefing on the impact of that [indiscernible] Across the departments so that we know that. >> Troxclair: I didn't know if y'all maybe wanted to hear an update on the flood mitigation task force and how that's progressing? >> Kitchen: That would be good to know. >> Garza: Sure. Anyone else? >> Zimmerman: Also, can you give me some feedback here on thoughts about reviewing some of this joint committee work that was done about the upper end of these tiers and some of the policies that were put in? Should we review some of that? >> Garza: I guess my only concern would be that Mr. Meszaros said that that is going to happen anyway so we just talked about we don't want to duplicate efforts. And then my assumption would be that joint committee was probably created by a council resolution, so that could be something done by any councilmember if they wanted to forward that. >> Zimmerman: But I guess is it something important enough to deserve some of our attention instead of us delegating it? Maybe we just pick it up and work on it. >> Kitchen: What's the timeline? The timeline for doing the review of the rates? That's what you're talking about the review the rates. >> Zimmerman: There's two things. There's a cost of service study, right, I guess that's going to be in progress. So there's cost of study, but there's also policy questions -- is it right to have three, four, five tiers? Does it make more sense to have two, three tiers? Questions like that? The other is when we do the

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wastewater estimation, we do it in the winter months when we expect there's no irrigation so we try to get an idea of how much of the water usage is going down the wastewater pipes so we do it in the winter. So one of the policies we could suggest is length inc. That period and doing a statistical sample where you knock out the highest measurement. So maybe if you had four months and three of the months were very, very close. One of the months was two or three times higher so then the policy would say if you get a spike like that when computing wastewater you throw out that measurement and you take the three measurements that are close together. That's a policy type thing, right? >> Garza: But is that kind of in line with what Ellen was suggesting, some kind of -- you said you're going to work on something? >> Zimmerman: That would be one way to mitigate spikes, right, when talking about wastewater billing because some people are talking about their wastewater bill is through the roof. One way to mitigate that is to change the calculation in the winter months and knock out any kind of spikes that are 50% higher or some metric. >> Troxclair: Yeah. I guess it's a little different than what I was talking about because I was walk archbishop talking about water and you are talking about wastewater. We could include that in our conversation. >> Zimmerman: Okay. >> Garza: I guess I'm not sure if you're asking for us to do that -- that rate structure, to suggest a rate structure? >> Zimmerman: I tell you what, if we're thinking about an agenda item I'll propose something and see what you think. >> Garza: Perfect. I think we suggested about five or six things so they might not be on December, but we'll definitely put them somewhere because I really like that we didn't go until 6:00. >> Zimmerman: Me too. The other thing I would like to ask us to think about is the stage 2 water restrictions. I don't know why we as a committee don't recommend that to the full city council? I think we should deliberate

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we don't need to be in stage 2 if we decide that and then recommend something to the full council? >> Garza: We can talk about adding that on the agenda. >> Troxclair: I think director Meszaros was planning -- owe if you are going to recommend anything you will bring it back to public utilities, right? I was assuming after the stakeholder process that you would come back to us with your recommendation. Was that your plan? >> That would be the plan. We'll go through -- it will be several months because we want to hit every council district and do other forms of input and then some time before the next

irrigation system starts, in say may, maybe a month before that, we come back to the P.U.C. As a first stop and say here's our recommendations for drought -- for the watering schedules and the other matters associated with that and then the P.U.C. Could weigh in on it and then ultimately on to the full council. >> Zimmerman: So let me just make this observation. I do remember a couple of months ago it was Mr. Darryl Slusher that came in and said we want stage 2 watering restrictions from now on. I remember that. And when we were in discussions with the Austin water utility it came up on the record again. Wouldn't it be a great idea if we had stage 2 watering restrictions indefinitely. That's on the record too. There's been two statements that awu wants to have stage 2 water restrictions from now on. So I'm skeptical that we could have an objective survey of the community if the water stilt is saying we want stage 2 restrictions from now on. I'm skeptical that we could get a good public feedback from you guys. >> I do recommend stage 2 or one day per week watering, but there's a lot to that

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recommendation. We would report out the surveys and other things. I mean, I don't mean to be presumptuous. If the council wants to pass a resolution that says go back to two day a week watering it's in your authority to do that. >> Garza: That's what I was going to say is the staff makes recommendations to us and you will make a recommendation to us and if one of us doesn't agree with that recommendation we will vote against it and in the interim if the councilmember can get the four sponsors necessary to put it on the agenda they could do it now. >> Zimmerman: Sounds good. >> Garza: All right. So we are adjourned at 4:38. Thank you.