



City of Austin

Communications and Public Information Office

301 W. Second St., Austin, TX 78701

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Doug Matthews, Chief Communications Director

DATE: April 28, 2017

RE: Update on CIUR 1826/Council Resolution 20161103-047 -
Childcare Options for Public Meetings

On November 3, 2016, City Council passed a resolution instructing the City Manager to explore options for providing childcare at public meetings, and to bring forward recommendations and potential budget implications (Resolution 20161103-047). This memo provides an update on the progress toward fulfilling the requirements of the resolution.

Over the past few months, the Communications and Public Information Office (CPIO) has been leading an interdepartmental working group in researching and evaluating the issues outlined in the resolution. That group has included representatives from Parks and Recreation, Planning, Equity, Public Health, Resource Recovery, Watershed Protection, Neighborhood Housing & Community Development, and Transportation. The group has also sought feedback from United Way of Central Texas and the Austin Independent School District (AISD).

The group has requested that they be given additional time (until May 25) to solicit additional feedback and complete their report, but there are some general takeaways and recommendations below. Please note that each of these areas will be more fully discussed in the work group's report at the end of May.

General policy recommendation

The group feels that implementing a policy that covered the entirety of Council meetings, Boards and Commissions, and committee/working group meetings would be both logistically and financially challenging. They instead felt that an initial policy should focus on childcare services for community meetings and community engagement activities that occur outside of the City's more formal proceedings.

Potential service providers

In consultation with AISD and the United Way, the group believes that the best course of action is using the City's RFP/RFQ process to determine interest and capacity within the region. It was



City of Austin

Communications and Public Information Office

301 W. Second St., Austin, TX 78701

acknowledged that while there are many potentially qualified providers, the unique nature of “on call” childcare for short periods of time (generally two hours or less) may not be attractive or feasible for some of them. Utilizing paid City staff for such activities would require removing them from regular duties and/or accruing overtime to provide service. The intermittent nature of the work would make recruiting and retaining temporary staff challenging.

Funding requirements

While uncertain without issuing an RFP/RFQ, the working group did look at the base costs of providing licensed/certified childcare providers within the City of Austin, and the anticipated number of engagement events that would be eligible for on-site childcare. Based on the most conservative assumptions (highest rate, 100% participation) the costs could be as much as \$75,000 per year. It would be fair to assume that any proposer would want some measure of guaranteed work as part of an agreement. Exploration of potential state/federal funding sources has not been completed at this time.

Contractor requirements/options

There is nothing that prevents the City of Austin from including a childcare requirement in any solicitation that includes a community engagement subcontractor opportunity. If the City of Austin does move forward with a single/preferred contractor for childcare services, the preference would be to guide engagement consultants to that resource, rather than sourcing their own – which is not their core area of practice or expertise.

Best practices/resources

The working group has found few comparable examples to use as benchmarks. While at least one smaller community (Brookhaven, GA) has piloted childcare during City Council meetings, those are much shorter evening meetings that occur on a less frequent basis than Austin’s City Council meetings. Most of the points-of-reference for the working group have been based on prior experiences offering childcare here in the City of Austin (flood community meetings, Spirit of East Austin, for example). These provide excellent context in terms of logistical guidelines that may be applied whether the final recommendation is for internal or contract resourcing of services.

Again, a final report and recommendations is forthcoming at the end of May. Please feel free to contact Larry Schooler (larry.schooler@austintexas.gov) at 512.974.6004 with any questions you may have in the interim.

CC: Elaine Hart, Interim City Manager
Ray Baray, Chief of Staff