

City Council Special Called Meeting – Budget Work Session

Transcript - 09/04/2019

Title: City of Austin

Channel: 6 - COAUS

Recorded On: 9/4/2019 6:00:00 AM

Original Air Date: 9/4/2019

Transcript Generated by SnapStream

=====

[9:08:36 AM]

>> Mayor Adler: All right. It is September 4, 2019. We are in a budget work session here at 9:08 in the boards and commissions room, city hall. We're here for a budget work session 3. Manager, we have some reports to start with today. Ed? >> Real quick to get us rolling here, this is our second and final budget work session prior to the budget reading starting on September 10th of next week. We have three things on the agenda, but of course we're posted for general discussion of the city's fy2020 proposed budget so we can talk about anything you want to, but these are three things that staff are prepared to speak to. One would be a follow-up conversation on our first responder and mental health calls for service. There's a lengthy discussion on that at the last work session. Staff from police and ems and from austin-travis county integral care are back to provide a more

[9:09:36 AM]

focused recommendation based upon all the conversation they heard from you at the last work session and what we've heard from community groups at the public hearings. We have a recommendation today to present to you. Second, we'll have staff from our fire department come. We were asked to provide a briefing on the new proposed command technician program as well as a very short briefing on our -- the activities of our wildfire division. At the end of the presentation, I just have what we know to date in regards to and amendments to the proposed budget. So this won't be everything, but we are aware some of amendments to the proposed budget that staff will be recommending to you on September 10th. For example, the new two cents that you approved for the hotel tags, we're making some adjustments to our budget proposal in order to reflect those additional two pennies. So right now those are just the things that we know. Of course, what we still don't know is what staff is going to recommend in regards to the additional revenue. We're seeing under certification and still

[9:10:37 AM]

seeking input from you at today's work session and as we move closer to September September 10th. There was also a lot of conversation at the last work session about the police staffing plan and vacant seize. A lot of questions on that. Late last night we posted a response to all those questions. I've also provided you a hard copy in anticipation given the timing of when we posted it last night, you may not have seen it. We have staff and the police department here who would be happy to continue that conversation with you if there's any more questions on that area. So unless there's questions about the plan for today, I'll send it over to chief Newsome to talk about the additional staff recommendations on. >> Garza: If there are questions should we daylight that so staff should prepare it be here if necessary? This is what I spoke to yesterday about and it was specifically at our judicial committee we were given a presentation that it appears

[9:11:38 AM]

we're closer than we've ever been in order to provide a childcare facility, but it's not funded. Some of the costs aren't funded so I had some question on what those costs would be. Would somebody be around to talk about that? >> I haven't seen them yet, but I'm sure they will be here by the time we get through the presentations to talk about that topic. >> Garza: Thank you. >> Kitchen: Mayor? I also -- we can do this later. I wanted to be sure and surface some issues that I had, just a few, that I don't know if you all will be addressing as part of the last part related to the board of adjustment fees. So I have one or two things that I think that I may not have mentioned yet in terms of my questions about the budget. So in the board adjustment fees I think is one of them. But we could -- I just want to surface that at the end so that -- and then depending on the time I can

[9:12:39 AM]

always put more information on the message board. >> Mayor Adler: Okay. That would be helpful. Ed? >> Okay. Good morning, everyone. After last week's discussion and hearing your concerns and your recommendations, we went back and we worked to dial this in a little tighter to bring the meadows foundation recommendation into a more clean presentation related to budget. There were four recommendations that had budget impacts. The first one being -- I went too far. The first one being the mental health training for call takers. There's 104 call takers and 74 dispatchers who will all need this additional eight hours of training. In order to do that we have to pull them off the the line from being on the console and backfill their position with overtime so they can attend that training, which would have a 50,000-dollar budgetary impact, one-time funding. We can start the training in January, complete it by June to get everyone trained.

[9:13:43 AM]

Second recommendation, the mental health integrated dispatch, the recommendation is to fully fund four clinical positions emcot clinical positions in the dispatch center to be involved with -- on the first point of entry into the system with the 911 calls. The impact would be \$455,000, which would be ongoing funding each year. And that should be able to be started in January as well. There was the issue of the telehealth expansion. We have the pilot running right now still in its infancy, but in order to expand it and to continue it, we're recommending adding two and a half emcot clinician positions to be the people who are on the receiving end of those phone calls in order to address the citizen's concerns at the time. The budget impact ongoing would be \$313,000, beginning

[9:14:43 AM]

with the partial year implementation here in 2020. And then finally, the fourth one is adding community health paramedics. The recommendation is to add six and one captain in order to address these concerns. The budget impact one-time funding of \$645,000. 761,000 ongoing in complete years. And again, that should be able to be started by January of 2020. This chart is just a breakdown of those four recommendations with the 2020 cost as well as the 2021 costs, which are additional due to the full year funding. And finally, there were some questions that came from councilmember harper-madison related to the dispatch training and how they demonstrate proficiency. Currently all at they communicators a receive 64 hours of training.

[9:15:43 AM]

48 is a basic state telecommunications course, 24 hours of crisis communication. They have to demonstrate proficiency by taking state certifying test based off that training and they don't receive their license and maintain their employment if they don't pass that. In addition to that they have daily observation from train fears a time period on a field training program to make sure that they adhere to what their training guidelines are. And finally, how will the 40 hours of mental health training for all APD officers impact the budget? It really won't other than just normal resources. You know, we deal with big training blocks all the time and so sergeants are cautious of allowing people to go to training when people are off and so we manage it so that we don't have vacancies we have to fill on those patrol shifts with overtime. Any questions? >> Mayor Adler: Any questions about the presentation?

[9:16:43 AM]

Kathie? >> Tovo: Just quickly on page 5, it talks about it says there's a caveat of -- as sixth street that says excludes meadows recommendation for telehealth software and contracts. Can you help me understand that and how it would be funded? >> The existing software that integral care uses that we're using for the pilot already connects the clinician with the person in crisis, and thus far it's been no cost. And I'll let dawn talk about why that is and how it will continue. >> Tovo: So we will have the software we need, it just won't be an additional cost. >> That's correct. We currently ran the pilot project with our existing video conferencing software that we use with our telepsychiatry, so it was easy to implement that process into taking it in the field with the officers. So this is just a continuation of using that to move the project forward

[9:17:44 AM]

and to take it to scale and also just trying to be mindful around some of the costs and some of the added components to this project in trying to be diligent and making sure that we're funded for everything we were trying to accomplish. >> Tovo: Great, thank you. Can you talk a little bit about the pilot? I assume it was a successful pilot since you're looking to continue and expand it? We did hear some concerns at the budget hearing about telehealth versus -- what's the alternative? Face to face, I guess, real face to face interactions? And I wonder, dawn or chuck if you could speak to that -- chief Newsome if you could speak to that. >> It's another tool in the toolkit. It's in addition to the crisis services we currently have. We're looking at expanding this, adding the clinicians on the fall at the call center. We already have an expanded mobile crisis outreach team that gives you that face to face interaction. And the telehealth is just

[9:18:45 AM]

another tool so it's a forced multiplier to the emcot team. If you noticed in the meadows reported it did make some comments related to our availability. We're not staffed to be available 24/7, and in the analysis on some of the data where there's higher volume of calls for APD and ems, we weren't actually staffed to be working during those times, so they would give us the affordability to close the gap and be more affordable to our first responders. We just started the pilot with APD first and we're getting ready to launch it with ems right now. So it's just another tool, using this tool in our own delivery system, the clients actually prefer it, so we think that it so far has been very helpful here. And it's voluntary so with ask them if they want to use it and if they decide they do then we implement the service. >> If I can add to that, at a point where it was being used and if the clinician thought the better thing would be for them to come to the scene then that would be

[9:19:46 AM]

possible as well. It's a hybrid between face to face and telehealth. >> It also cuts down on the travel time. >> On the? >> The travel time. The amount of time that the first responders are on the scene. So that kind of cuts that time actually in half is what we've found thus far. >> Tovo: So had you mentioned the availability of the emc team. Are there plans to kind of shift some of the hours around to make -- >> Absolutely. So I think if you'll notice in this recommendation it's just adding 2.5 staff to the emcot team to allow for the telehealth. Instead of building it as a project on it's own it will be folded into the existing team. We will be able to shift the scheduling and add these two and we learned from our Houston partners that they have a 10 to 1 ratio, that's what we're operating off of as far as availability. I think it will help close the gap. >> Tovo: And just to clarify mostly for the public, these are recommendations that would be in addition to what is

[9:20:46 AM]

already in the proposed budget? I mean, some of these go beyond what was in the proposed budget that the city manager brought forward? >> Yes, ma'am. >> Tovo: Thanks very much. >> Mayor Adler: Ann. >> Kitchen: Thank you very much. This is -- I'm very excited about this. I think this is a really huge step to take to build on the great work that we're already doing. So I wanted to follow up on the software. What I'd like to suggest and ask is I know we had some conversation last time about wanting to make sure we get to the place that we have the best practice software. That actually has all of the functionality that we need to share data across

[9:21:47 AM]

entities. And to really dooring that we need to do. -- To do what we need to do. What I'd like to suggest is we see if we can find the dollars to bring in some expertise to help you guys analyze the best software. Because I understand, and you tell me if this is correct, but it would seem there needs to be an analysis both of the specifications, the functionality, what you need the software to do, and then you need to analyze what you've got in terms of the video conferencing that you're using right now and how it connects to your electronic health record, how it connects to the community health care paramedics and the other professionals that you need to share information with. So what I'd like to ask is I think that consulting contract to bring in that

[9:22:48 AM]

kind of expertise would not be that expensive but I think it would be helpful to augment both from a time perspective and to just get someone who really understands the software. Then that person could help you understand well, does it make sense to take your video -- the system you have right now and build it out over time or does it make sense to acquire a new piece of software? So I think that what we

can do perhaps is authorize the additional dollars which my guess would be 50,000 or so just to do that, and the results of that would tell us whether or not you really -- we really need to invest 250,000 or whatever it is for a piece of software. But I think it's important to allow for that capability

[9:23:51 AM]

right now because a best practice software that does everything you need to do needs to be part of the system. Does that make sense to you all? And then I'm asking if we could find of dollars. To me that's relatively low. If we could find those kind of dollars, 50,000 or so to bring someone in to help with expertise. Does that make sense? >> I agree. >> We understand the direction. >> Kitchen: Does that make sense to you guys? >> That's a great recommends and I think that there is some room within the budget that we could hopefully support that recommendation, but I think you're absolutely right. I think that is a way to look forward and to make sure that we're able to do the analysis that we need to fill the gaps. >> Kitchen: Okay. I don't want that to pull away from the other items that you recommended because those are really critical.

[9:24:51 AM]

Whether it's in the budget or you need to find it, that's fine, but I don't want to pull away from what's being funded here. Okay? >> Alter: Thank you. I think this is an important direction for us to consider as part of the budget. I do have a couple of specific questions. It looks looks like you increased the number to four from two from the recommendation that we saw last week. Can you explain that change? >> For the clinicians? Go ahead, dawn. >> When I looked at the report, meadows report in detail, based on the hours of operation, meadows didn't have quite the right staffing pattern for the hours of operation. There were only I believe two staff involved in that and it's a seven-day a week 16 hours a day. And we wouldn't have had coverage if someone were out

[9:25:52 AM]

for leave. So we were trying to change it from the telehealth proposal, which was quite roe V. Wade bust. And mover it over to the staffing so we could add staffing there. Still working actually under the total of the two and just trying to resource resource it in a way that we could scale it. >> Alter: And the numbers that are on the chart at the end are taking out the contribution that are already in the budget for emcot. >> That's correct. >> Alter: So there's an additional 1.8 million. >> 1.1 million from the city and 700,000 from Travis county. >> Alter: Thank you. Can someone explain what happens with the mental health stipends if everyone is getting the same training? >> Obviously everyone here knows the stipends are a meet and confer contract issue. They've been in that contract for years and they were put in there years ago as an incentive to get

[9:26:56 AM]

people to volunteer to be mental health crisis intervention officers. We're now moving forward with everybody to make sure that the first response to the most delicate and sensitive calls have everyone showing up and trained at the same level. And then given the fact that we do 5600 emergency detentions a year, it's about 14 a day, every single day and currently there's 160 mental health officers, we need to increase that if we're going to continue having only people who are receiving that stipend because of the contract to do the emergency attention. That's our plan. If we get the additional stipends is to make it show everyone is trained at the same level, only the people receiving the stipend are going to be responsible for doing the emergency detentions. It gives a smaller core of people who are used to doing those and who are more -- hopefully more cognizant

[9:27:57 AM]

About people's civil liberties when doing the detentions. It meets the needs of the department and matches up with the meet and confer contract. >> I'm a little bit confused. So if we train everybody, everybody is eligible, but then we will still have a subset that has more training that will get the stipend? It's not more training, but more reps that do emergency detentions. It's more frequency. They're the ones to make the call to remove someone from their house and take them to a medical facility for evaluation. >> Alter: Okay. And I've heard there are challenges because they're receiving the stipend but not being called. How will that be fixed? >> It's a challenge, but it's in the contract. We can't stop paying the stipends, we can't make the decision because it's in the meet and confer contract. We're trying to work around that and create a system

[9:28:58 AM]

where all officers who respond to emergency urgent calls of people in crisis are all trained the same as the mental health officer. There's no reason to the way, no need to call anybody extra because you're all trained the same, but at the end of that if the person needs to be committed it's a smaller core of people who are more frequently do those emergency detentions and are more familiar with the procedure. >> Alter: Okay. I certainly support the additional training. I'm not sure how it works. I'll have to think about that and not want to take up the time on that right now. I would point out that we do try to put it in ordinance and not have it in the contract. It was put in the contract anyway, now reducing our flexibility. I just want to flag that. The chips for the six additional chips, we've heard several different

[9:29:59 AM]

rationales for the ch Ps, some having to do with mental health, some with homelessness. Can you speak or the appropriate person speak to what the anticipated role of the six additional community health paramedics would be and what additional services we would be getting from this group of paramedics? >> Sure. So the additional -- the six additional community health paramedics and additional captain, it's a small core group that specialize in addressing needs that are not typically addressed on an ambulance or best suited being on an ambulance. With this group it is probably one of the most agile groups when it comes to medical responders that we have. So this would expand the capability or at least create some capacity for them to be able to respond with pd. And as pd may utilize cit officers to go to the most critical calls, we may

[9:30:59 AM]

utilize chp for the other end of the spectrum where they go to the least critical calls where there is no potential for violence or anything like that. And they can handle a call freeing up an ambulance for other responses. This core group is much easier to train a small core group that has more knowledge and expertise in this particular topic. And what we anticipate is this would be a group of individuals that we could have on at various times of the day so they could work with the cit officers so they would have additional training, expertise and they bring the medical component being able to evaluate medically and clear medical issues in the field if there are any. So that's what the additional chips would be able to provide there. There are many calls that we go to that don't have a pd response or a police department response. They come out as a medical call and then we look at what the root of the call

[9:32:01 AM]

was and it actually ends up being something involving mental health. This would be a good resource to address these Netherlands be able to get them to an alternate resource rather than taking them to a hospital and letting the hospital figure it out and eventually they end up back on the streets. >> Alter: Thank you. And I think my last question is for Ed. Beyond the 2.5 million of additional money did staff identify other opportunities to fund these expenses? >> We haven't at this time other than we're still looking at the one-time costs. On one of these slides chief Newsome mentioned \$145,000 of one-time costs. We're be look at what those costs were. If some could be appropriate to issue debt for. Not that it's a cost deal, but it's something that wouldn't have to be made immediately out of general fund resources. So we're still looking into that. >> Alter: And that would be for things like whatever

[9:33:01 AM]

the paramedics -- >> There are some vehicles that we're working on the exact cost of the vehicle and that could be something that we could finance. There may be other elements and we still need to work through the details of that. >> Alter: Okay. Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Greg? >> Casar: I want to thank each of you for your really hard work on this. I know there were a lot of questions during the last work session and I know you found ways of tying many of those up. I recognize that this will be a shift and a change if we fund this and start expanding this for a lot of our staff and employees, but my hope is that it makes everybody's -- makes not just the community of folks have a better response, but make sure we staff things appropriately for the different situations people face. And I know that our police officers are asked to do so many different jobs in the community and finding ways that we have specialized folks in police and as far as clinicians and ems in addressing this item. The message gets across that we're doing this not just to help folks that need the response in the community,

[9:34:02 AM]

but that hopefully organizationally this will be better for all of our staff. So appreciate y'all's leadership, y'all's putting this table together. Again, it makes a lot of -- generally it makes a lot of sense to me and answers question. Between now and the 10th I want to understand this hybrid that if someone is in a more potentially intense situation, how we make sure all of the staff are safe, but if telehealth isn't the most appropriate when somebody is in that more heightened situation, I just want to understand how we're thinking about that. But a hybrid and that idea makes sense to me. So let's just keep talking about that, but I really wanted to thank you for your work so far. And then I wanted to make sure on the chp side with your answers to councilmember alter. I think the understanding would be with the level of chp we could do more proactive and reactive work. >> Yeah.

[9:35:02 AM]

So with each additional chp for time that they're not involved in a mental health call, they could be doing any number of other activities that they already do -- that the existing group already does. So we have several that work on homelessness and working with community care, with the police department, on integral care on the cost team. We also have several that are working on opiate response and follow-up to individuals that are having issues with opiate overdoses and addiction. We also -- they could also follow up and work with those that are frequently calling ems or emergency services for non-emergent issues. So yeah. So within the time frame that they have and that they're not on a call involving a mental health crisis they could also be proactively out working with any -- working on any one the initiatives that's a primary focus of the

[9:36:02 AM]

council. >> Casar: Hopefully that will reduce the times we're having to respond to the mental health issues. I heard from community care that they're willing to put money behind funding the street med program that has been successful and us being there to help them with that would be great. Thanks to each of your work. My hope suspect that between here and the 10th if there's any little refinements we have to do we can work that out, but I do hope to see us move forward with a big chunk of this. So thank you to everybody here. >> Thank you. >> Flannigan: Thank you all. On slide 6 I'm really glad to see the second year costs being listed. I'm hopeful we can do that with our decision making so we can understand the long-term impacts of these financial decisions. I am concerned about something that you said -- did you say that some of the money that had been budgeted for telehealth was moved to another bucket? Can you explain that again? >> Right. Actually, it hasn't been moved. We were just looking at the total amount that was requested for telemedicine

[9:37:04 AM]

and then the total amount that was requested for the call center clinicians and there wasn't enough dollars in the call center clinicians and since we had savings on the telehealth, just a recommendation would be to use some of those savings to help fund the call center positions because with the hours that are requested there's not enough -- two staff can't cover seven days a week, two 16-hour shifts. So we needed to add additional staff to cover the weekend. And then those staff roll over could be to cover any vacancies for any outages or we can scale the hours back. >> Flannigan: The savings that you're talking about, is that excludes the 20 grand for software, is that the savings? >> Some of it is just in staffing and some was considering the 200,000 for the software and telehealth because the ems Ares for telehealth involved three -- actually five positions and we took it down to two and a half to try to borrow some of that and put it in the call center's function. >> Flannigan: So the recommendation for telehealth was five

[9:38:04 AM]

positions and we're only two two and a half? >> Right. >> Flannigan: And we did in order to increase the call center response portion? >> That's correct. >> Flannigan: So I'm not sure that I would agree with that allocation. I also have a concern about the scalability of the mental health folks that are in person. I just don't know that there's ever enough people that we could actually hire to put in enough police cars. So I would much prefer to see telehealth expanded now and really see how much that can impact the need for the in-person services. I'm glad to hear that these decisions have trade-offs because I've been desperately seeking that conversation. You can't just add money to one bucket without shifting money from another bucket. And from my perspective telehealth is something that's much more -- it's

[9:39:05 AM]

going to be much more valuable to the community in terms of our ability to reach more people more frequently and/or consistently. So I would prefer to see that shifted around in another way.

Councilmember kitchen, you talked about 50,000 for a consultant. I think I missed what you were saying on that. >> Kitchen: What I was saying is I believe that there's a good chance that we will we may need to purchase software at some point. But wildfire we purchase software we have to analyze both the specs that we need -- you know, we need to analyze what functionality we need from a software specifically because they're using software right now, they have an electronic health record right now. They have a means for sharing data. But the question is whether they have all the functionality with that software or are they just kind of piecing it together. So we know we want best practice so that they can share all the data that they need to share. But that is the first step

[9:40:05 AM]

before we go out and purchase any software -- you know this better than I. Before we go out and purchase any software we have to know exactly what we're trying to get. And that takes some analysis analysis. And I don't think that -- I think it would be helpful for them to have some expertise to help them do that analysis so I was talking about that as a first step to then determine which software. We can do all that. All that can be done without purchasing the software. >> Flannigan: So the software that's being used right now I'm not as familiar with it. Is that owned by the city or is it owned by integral care? >> It's actually a Microsoft product. >> But who paid for it? >> We did. >> Flannigan: So integral care determined that this was the software solution? >> Correct. It's the one that we're currently using with our telepsychiatry so we expanded it to telehealth. >> And psychiatry including with first responders? >> No we have an internal

[9:41:07 AM]

outpatient clinic with telepsychiatry. So this is the same platform, but using mental health clinicians versus a physician -- >> Flannigan: I see what you're saying, but we are talking about putting the devices in the hands of first responders and that would be new. >> That's new. >> Flannigan: So I'm not -- I agree that we need to do the evaluation. I just don't know that the staff can't do it themselves. And we don't have to go back and forth on this because you've got a take, I've got a take and we're not going to convince each other differently, but I think the staff can do this without hiring a consultant. >> Kitchen: If I can take a second there, if it's okay. I think it's important because you know that -- I'm not talking about a lot of money for a big consulting firm. I'm talking about an individual who understands specification and functionality of software. Somebody has to translate the technology into the use case and these guys of course know the use case. They know what they need to use it for.

[9:42:08 AM]

But that's but someone needs to say we need to share this data between these two people, but someones that to share the technology because otherwise you're at the mercy of the technology firm and we're trying to share you something. And as you know they will tell you that they can do everything. >> As you know, consultants also have vendors they prefer and you get the same deal and spend 50 grand for that process. So I don't agree with your characterization. I think staff can do that analysis. Nonetheless, I would like to know more about the software tool that is being used because I said in the last budget work session I don't consider next week's adoption as the end of the conversation. I see it as the beginning. We will continue to refine the work of the city as we iterate through these different solutions. I'm not convinced that the solution built for telemedicine is the one I'm comfortable if with for our first responders. I would like to know more about that.

[9:43:09 AM]

The community health paramedics, the list of items that you described that they do when they're not in an emergency call, how much of that work is being cost allocated to other entities. >> I'm not sure I understand. >> Flannigan: If a community Heer's is doing the job of integral care or central health. You get my point? >> Sure. >> Are we distributing the cost of the community Heer's like we do for emcot? I not sure there's a way to equate when they're performing the tasks that integral care or community health should do. The operation they're serving are the ones that we respond to that happen to cross many different paths. The system is so porous that no single one agency would be able to identify and tackle the issues of the patients that we see. So we work collaboratively. When the individual -- community health paramedic is working with the

[9:44:09 AM]

individual, as soon as we active what it is that they need we have very close diazotize to those entities and we can collaborate and actually coordinate efforts so it's not -- I don't know necessarily how to parse out everyday and -- like we can look at referrals and when -- what agencies referrals are sent to. But they call on ems and so this is our response to providing a more comprehensive and actually more health care efficient manner doing that. >> Flannigan: And this may not be a question for you and it may be for the manager or Ed, but do we know that the cost allocation for emcot was derived, 1.1 from the city and 700,000 from the county? >> You may be able to help with this, but my recollection is last year emcot lost some federal grant funding, the county stepped up first and offered to fill that gap by \$700,000, and then there's a request from emcot to fill the remaining cost of \$1.1 million. I don't know if you have anything to add to that. >> It was a 60/40 split on

[9:45:10 AM]

the total cost for the crisis mobile outreach team and 60 was covered by the city and 40 by the county. That was based off of use case, who is using what emcot the most. And we work mostly with ems and APD in that regard. >> Flannigan: How do we determine when it's used for the county, when it's used for the city. >> I don't think we've gone through and itemized it. >> Flannigan: Where did 60/40 come from? >> That was it from the city and county leaders on how to approach that. >> Flannigan: It wasn't a data driven analysis. It was more of a -- I don't know how to characterize it. >> We calculate how many times the sheriff's department for instance would call us out and we know how many times we're dispatched with ems and we know how many times we're dispatched with APD. So there was some data involved. >> Flannigan: I mean, 95% of the city is in the county, but not -- the county is more than 95% city of Austin. So it just seems like those ratios should be reversed. That the county should be

[9:46:10 AM]

picking up larger pieces when it's serving a wider population. So of course that last five percent is where I live so I have a whole other issue of how my wilco folks get served. But I get that the city is alone going to pick up that piece and we have other conversation to have with wilco on a larger level with all the municipal courts up there, which have been -- municipalities that have been there so far. We'll get there on public safety, I think. Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: We have two more reports. Are we ready to move on? >> Kitchen: One more question. Councilmember Flannigan raised a lot of good questions about the telemelt ftes. I was thinking in terms of the clinics that are handling 911 calls, -- the clinicians that are handling the 911 calls, and then

[9:47:10 AM]

there's the telehealth. So to me I was thinking of them as both of those buckets are needed as opposed to trading off between them because you can't do the triage using telehealth, right? So you can't take if you take from the clinicians and put it in the telehealth you can do that, but you're reducing the function that you have available because you're not using the telehealth functionality to do the triage that happens through 911. Is that right? >> That's correct. So having the clinician on the floor at 911 is as far upstream as you can go for your potential for diversion. So that's when people in the community are calling 911 and they're saying I need fire, I need ems. There's an assessment with the call center staff to determine if it's a mental health need, if it's a mental health need they can hand it to clinicians and we have the various options. We can utilize the

[9:48:11 AM]

telehealth with a police officer or ems or it might be that it's something that we could dispatch emcot on our own without even involving any of our first responders. So that is a diversion full upstream. So telehealth is just a tool in the field. It's not a triage tool at the point in time that the call comes through. We did model our telehealth project after the model in Houston, which is using their sheriff's department and that's how we determined would our software work because it's analogous to theirs,? And how did their first responders respond to that project so there are lessons there. We could show you a demonstration so you could see how it works. For the telehealth component we could use additional staff. We were trying to work within the limits of what was in the report to try to staff it correctly because there were not enough -- there was not enough funds allocated for the call center staff in in the initial recommendation based on the

[9:49:12 AM]

hours of help they would be available. >> Kitchen: I agree with the allocation of health that you have. I would love to have more ftes in telehealth because I think we need to eventually get that there. The thing that innutritions me so much in tele-- that intrigues me so much in telehealth is that it is such a good way, an effective way to save dollars and depend I think is the word you were using earlier. So I think we need it all, but I think that the approach that you've taken to emphasize at this point the clinicians in the triage is the appropriate thing to do at this point. >> Flannigan: If I can add to that real quick. When I was talking about the trade-offs, I was talking more about the trade-off between the in-person service versus the telehealth service, not between the call center and the telehealth because I don't -- you could pick a number out of a hat, it would be fine. I think there's more value in investing in the telehealth versus the

[9:50:14 AM]

in-person. >> Kitchen: But we're not investing in the in-person. That is in the triage center. >> Flannigan: It's 1.1 million for two and a half new emcot folks, right? Isn't that what that is? >> Kitchen: Is that what you were referring to? >> The 1.1 until is the existing mobile crisis outreach team. >> Kitchen: I understand. I misunderstood what you were saying. >> It's 313,000 for the telehealth staff. >> Flannigan: I was thinking about that. >> And that is important to remember that it's the same staff. Emcot clinics that respond to the scene are the same ones that answer the device on the other end so adding to one is truly adding to both. >> But as telehealth they will reach more people through a device than they can in a police car going call to call. That's my point. >> I get it. And one more point of clarification. They don't ride out with the officers. They respond in their own cars. >> Mayor Adler: Natasha? >> Harper-madison: Actually, I would like to

[9:51:14 AM]

echo my colleagues' appreciation for all of your hard work in getting us this information. My question was answered by the magnificent Ed van eenoo. [Laughter]. It does lie to me to believe that we are definitely going to have some conversations moving forward about the police retirement system. My question specifically was how would the addition of 30 officers, how could we instead contribute to the police retirement system. But what did you say, Ed? Negligible was a part of the response there. So it seems that isn't an option. But given some of the information in this actuarial report it's concerning. So just putting it out there that we're definitely going to need to have that conversation moving forward. >> Yes, ma'am. >> Harper-madison: Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Anything else on this before we go to the next report? Thank you very much.

[9:52:14 AM]

Managers, thanks for being responsive on this issue as raised by the council and processing it so quickly. >> Garza: I have a question, mayor. Are our APD people leaving if we had questions about the staffing memo? >> Mayor Adler: I think the staffing memo will come up in the third presentation. We're going to have a presentation here about fire and then a presentation about staffing vacancy. No? >> Mayor and council, we had given the budget question as part of the backup in front of you, but we do have staff available to answer any questions about police staffing. So we're happy to take that up after the three presentations. >> Garza: But it's not part of the formal. >> Correct. >> We don't have a prepared presentation for that. >> Mayor Adler: I think they were just here to answer questions on the staffing. >> Garza: We can ask those after? >> Yes. Chief, welcome. >> Good morning, sir.

[9:53:17 AM]

Good morning, sir. Good morning, everyone. Please go ahead. >> Again, good morning, everyone. Thank you for opportunity to come before you all to talk about our command technician program as well as the wild land fire division. The question is really how did we get here today and what are we doing in the Austin fire department? I want to start off by talking about our decision-making priority for the Austin fire department. , Which is very important to understand. Whenever I as the fire chief make a decision on any program and service that we bring before council, bring before the community, I think about six things in specific. First, priority and making my decision is based on what's best for the city of

[9:54:20 AM]

Austin and its key stakeholders, the citizens who we're shown to protect and serve. Our second priority is based on what are the needs of the Austin fire department, the city come first and the Austin fire department come second. And the city is making -- the third priority is the division of labors or the job silos. Operation, homeland security, logistics, administrative services, support services or fire prevention and wild land fire. The fourth decision I think about in every decision I make is the groups in the fire department, whether it be the African-American, white, Latino, hispanic, Asian and other race groups. Gay, straight, male, female, firefighters all the way up to the chief officer rank. The fifth priority I think about is in line with the individual need who come to me. What's the individual need of the department? And the last person that I ever consider in making my

[9:55:21 AM]

decision for the Austin police department is myself. I'm the last person, as well as the leadership of the organization come last. But our priorities, what are our priorities. How did I come about thinking about the command tech program. I list our priorities, which is human resources. Human resources, the people who work for the city of Austin fire department is our number one priority, as well as their safety. Who do we have on the department, what are they doing and what are their roles and responsibilities and what are my roles and responsibilities for them? My second organization priority is based on our emergency response readiness. How can we get from the fire station to Mr. And Ms. Baker house to minimize their need if they have a medical response or a fire need. The third priority the -- the third organizational priority is our professional development. Once we hire the best, take care of their safety and

[9:56:22 AM]

once we're able to respond in the various emergencies, we must make sure the members are professionally developed to maintain that level of service. The fourth organization priority are our facilities, equipment and technology. Restroom, bathroom, renovation. The condition of the fire station. Are the fire stations safe to live in? What technology is there to help us do our job? What type of equipment, apparatuses and support vehicles do we have and other technologies to deal with hazardous material and things of that nature. The fifth priority -- organizational priority is our customer service. How can we provide the best internal customer service as well as external customer service for our people? And the last organizational priority is rated to our peer program, peer. Public information, public education and public relation. We must inform the public, that's why we're here today, we must educate the public, that's why we're here today, and we need to enhance and

[9:57:23 AM]

maintain our relationship. And that's why we're here today. So without delay I want to move on to the command tech program overview to start with. There are very few minutes once the alarm come in that once our members arrive on the scene that we need to overwhelm the situation. Construction materials and materials more highly flammable. The furniture inside the residence is more highly flammable. We need to get there very quickly. Looking at the command tech program there are several cities through the nation that utilize command tech. I come from a city that utilize that. Houston, Dallas, the various ISDs, Pflugerville, San Marcos are a few in the local area that uses command technicians. These command technicians

[9:58:24 AM]

are not chauffeurs who work for Kerry limousine service. They play an integral part and make sure that we can maintain the safety of our members on fire scene and various other incidents. Each battalion fire chief has approximately eight to 10 fire stations and some stations have multiple units involved in their location. The command tech roles' varies, to drive the fire chief to on these emergency scene. Emergency you riding did -- imagine you riding down I-35, you trying to get to that emergency location and you are the battalion chief driving that vehicle. You have to listen to the radio, and in some cases a multiple challenge, the emergency challenge on the scene, what's going on on the scene, and god forbid a firefighter go down and we have to get a personal accountability report. You have to change challenges to that report. And there may be two or three other radio

[9:59:24 AM]

communications you need to listen to. So you're trying to get through the traffic and trying to make a decision on the best tactics and strategy without even visualizing -- using your mind to visualize what's taking place on that scene before you get there. And then because some cases there's no vehicles that our customers or the stakeholders have almost soundproof with air conditioning going and the music blasting and in some cases texting and driving and reading their phone. Just don't consider the public safety trying to get to that location. And you got all these things racing through your mind as a chief officer. But the command tech does more than that. They help coordinate the staffing, they help coordinate the needs of the community. If the community requests service from the fire department, the command tech helps with that. The command technician can help coordinate the training

[10:00:25 AM]

program utilized our esds to coordinate that training program and help maintain that level of support to that chief officer. It's that chief fire officer second or third on the scene. It's that chief officer support and -- prompting them to make more command decisions to overcome those incidents that we are

faced with every day. Command tech also provide that extra element of safety for our firefighters and safety for the community. That I already talked about earlier. Command tech, I talked about early also helped with the admission support. And if needed, if needed, if times get so tough in the Austin fire department financially, we can always send those command techs back to operation. I hope we won't get to that point, but a command tech again, great benefit in helping us coordinate training throughout our

[10:01:26 AM]

region. And that's why we're not really asking for additional training stuff to do that in the training department because our command tech can help coordinate that as well. So how do we implement or how do we plan on implementing the command technician? We're taking 27 firefighters and upgraded them -- 24, to be more specific, to the fire specialty range and three upgraded to lieutenant. At a cost of approximately \$864,000. We are not asking, we are not asking for any additional fire personnel to do this. We are asking to use the current resource we already have in our department. We're not asking for any additional health benefits or funding to do this. If the command tech is on leave, we're not planning on backfilling those positions to save money. At a total cost of

[10:02:27 AM]

approximately -- I mean \$1.3 million would be the total cost of this program. We're not asking council to I have good us an additional \$1.3 million. What we're saying that we're going to utilize the funds and we already have in our current budget to fund this program. I believe as a fire chief I have a due diligence to try to use the taxpayer dollars as responsible as possible and I think this is one way to do that, by looking at the funds we currently have, moving things around to make this program work. So let's talk about the wildfire division overview. For example. The wildfire division budget is 2.5 million. And is used to organize around three different programs. We have our fire adaptive community, approximately \$700,000, but it does not include the wildland-urban

[10:03:28 AM]

interface code. Our fire resilient landscape program, approximately 900,000 that we use to mitigate fuel mitigation, prescribed fire burn, management and the third program is about effective response. Our quarterly wide training, our community evacuation planning, and the command operation, those firefighters who are in operation, they have been trained to help us with the mitigation of fire fighting. Every firefighter in the Austin fire department is trained on the base level of wildland fire response. And also we're working with the audit team to look at ways how we continue to improve and enhance our

wildland fire division and that's an ongoing process and we are making progress with that but it's ongoing. I will pause here for any questions, concerns I need to address from this team. Thank you.

[10:04:28 AM]

>> Mayor Adler: Thank you for that presentation. Alison. >> Alter: So I'm going to start with the command tech and maybe we can have that conversation and then the wildfire, I think it's going to be real confusing if we conflate the two, if that would with okay. >> Mayor Adler: Okay. >> Alter: I hearing more been the rationale for the command tech program. I wanted though to dive into the financial element. So, you know, in the budget document it only cited the \$845,000, it doesn't mention the overtime. And it's my understanding as we're currently staffed if we move sworn staff to anywhere, their position still needs to be filled in order to maintain the four-person staffing. So can you speak to us about what the overtime implications are and how they were calculated? >> Yes, I'm going to pause and let Robert manchaca explain that. >> I'm Robert manchaca,

[10:05:29 AM]

chief admin for the fire department. Yes, there is overtime implications. We'll be moving 27 position off a truck and putting them in command tech positions. It's calculated 1.3 million. The details of that is historically those firefighters work 70% of the time, 30% off, so we calculate the time that they were on the truck and calculate that times the current average overtime rate that we're running. So approximately 11.3 million. \$864,000 is cost of the promotions. >> Alter: I'm going to want to see that calculated out. That doesn't seem -- >> Sure. >> Alter: -- To make sense. If we had 30 new officers, it would cost a whole lot more than a million dollars and I know there's other benefits and whatnot. >> Sure. >> Alter: I'm not sure that I'm comfortable with those numbers. The other piece of the overtime, and this comes out

[10:06:30 AM]

as a concern that arose when I first came on council where we had overtime for the fire department of \$20 million, and chief, this is before your time and we took a lot of pains to get that down. So I have two parts of my question. One is where are we at now with the overtime, and then how do I know that we're not just carrying those overtime expenses that were given to the fire department to address particular problem that we were having with the vacancy have not continued to stay within the fire department. At the time we kept being asked to add additional overtime, that was money that was coming out of opportunities to fund a whole host of other budgets. And the idea of fixing the vacancies and the overtime was so that we would have funding to fund other needs beyond fire. And so I had asked Ed for

some of these numbers to be able to kind of see that, so if you could try to address those concerns, I would need to know, you know, where are

[10:07:32 AM]

we now with our overtime budget. Is this 1.3 already captured in there? It seems like it may be higher than it might be if we were actually on that trajectory down. It was my understanding we had gotten to a point with the vacancies, and so help me understand that underlying dynamic so that we're not just rewarding with keeping that overtime money when there was mismanagement before chief baker came that led to the -- to vacancy challenges or there was a vacancy challenge that led to that, whether it was mismanagement. >> I also believe those overtime costs, if I'm not mistaken, has something to do with the court decree where we have so many vacant positions. I think it was like 200 vacant positions plus or minus. I may be mistaken -- >> Alter: Since I don't want to revisit why we had that, the fact is it changed and we can have different interpretations, but we had a 20 million spent on

[10:08:34 AM]

overtime that we managed to effect our recruitment, et cetera, that we are on a transition transition trajectory and how this additional request for overtime is playing into that. >> If I could offer use a piece of information for the perspective of it. I understand what you are saying. Under the consent decree there was a delay in period of time to follow the instructions that were given and people were still retiring so we ended up with the in ability to hire folks as we had a number of folks retiring and it took a little time to catch up. We have caught up over the course of time. We're no longer under the consent decree. The limitations that we had that didn't allow us to hire folks in a timely fashion do not can exist at this time. >> Alter: So it's my understanding we have fixed that vacancy issue enough to

[10:09:34 AM]

resolve the overtime. I'm trying to understand how the overtime numbers are tracking with that fix and whether we have left any overtime just budgeted because of the prior problems in the budget of the fire department that is now being moved around in different ways. To put it bluntly what I'm trying to understand. >> I think I understand your question. Some of the money that you've given us to cover the overtime costs. >> Alter: Uh-huh. >> Overtime is trending down. We've managed the vacancy practical and we're hiring regularly now. -- Vacancy problem. Which makes us operate cheaper. We have cheaper, younger staff so yes, I mean, is it reallocation of previously needed money, yes. >> Alter: So where are we -- we were at 20 million, then we are at 14 million, now where are we at this year?

[10:10:35 AM]

>> This year we'll be estimated 10.5. Next year it's estimated 9. >> Alter: Is this 1.3 already calculated in that number? >> Yes, ma'am. It's in the 9 million for next year. >> Alter: Okay, and what were you at before we started to have problems, like what would be a normal overtime calculation for a functioning department? I totally understand that we have overtime and it's part of how we have to adjust our -- >> I guess the reconciliation you might be looking for, if we didn't have the command text, overtime would be around \$7.5 million. >> Alter: If you didn't have. >> Yes. >> Alter: Now we're at ten point? >> We're at 9 million. Next year we'll be at 9 million. That's calculated. The total amount for the command techs, total costs to run the department will be 9 million.

[10:11:36 AM]

For fiscal year 20. >> Alter: This year we're at? >> 10.5. >> Alter: And in the budget for next year? >> 9 million. >> Alter: Without the command tech it would be -- >> A little less. >> Alter: And what would a normal overtime spend for a functioning normal fire department on overtime given our numbers, what would that -- >> I'm just borrowing some of Robert's data. If you went back to 2014, you would see that overtime at \$6.9 million is actual expenditure in overtime, so about 7 million. From there it started ramping up because of all the hiring problems. It went to 14 million, then 16, then 20. Peaked out at 20 million in 2017. Then the department started getting on top of its vacancies issues, brought it down to 14 million in 2018, 10.5 in 2019, and now we're -- in 2020 we're at 9 million, and as Robert said we would be at about

[10:12:38 AM]

7.7 million if we didn't have the additional overtime from this program. So it would be pretty normal. That would be, like, pre when it ramped up, 2014 levels. >> Alter: But in terms of the way we're calculating the budget over time, when we gave those pots of money for the overtime for the fire department, we asked other departments to cut their budgets so that we could fund the fire, and then we had money -- did that money just stay in -- like fire never took a cut to cut that back is what I'm -- >> No, their budget in 2014 was right around that same \$7 million. It went way down. >> Alter: There's the overtime budget and then the overall budget for the fire department. What I'm trying to understand is did the overtime that was given them extra ever come out of their budget other than 3 million one time, but other stuff ongoing. Did that ever come out of the budget? >> We can provide that

[10:13:38 AM]

accounting. >> Alter: I would like to see that coming out of their budget. But this command tech, though, has an additional 1 point something million dollars on top of the 845,000 that was demonstrated to us. >> We're not asking for additional money. It's just we're able to absorb that corks yes, ma'am, to run that program. >> Alter: I understand but we have a full general fund budget and my understanding it's already in your budget and you are not asking for additional money to the proposed budget. What was revealed in the budget was 845,000 to fund this program and it's actual an additional 1.3 million is what I'm trying to have out of the whole pot of the general fund. >> And I guess we interpret it as we understood the instruction to be reallocate funds within our budget. Not an additional but just reallocation. >> Alter: Thank you.

[10:14:42 AM]

>> Mayor Adler: Dahlia. >> Garza: I guess have I similar concerns to councilmember alter's in that I believe we took it from the reserve fund, wasn't it, the extra money for the overtime? >> We made midyear amendments and took it from our reserves. But then in the subsequent budgets we built it in and built the additional overtime funding into their ongoing budget. And then we have reduced that as they've started to get on top of their vacancy -- >> Garza: Okay. So it teams like we're -- we had just fixed our vacancies and now we could be creating another problem. And I understand -- I understand that it's reallocation within what was -- what was allocated, but, you know, as we're looking over an entire general fund, not just a department, it's just hard to know that there is kind of money in a bucket

[10:15:42 AM]

somewhere and it's not really getting used for something that -- that is as important as something else and then it gets moved and that's money that maybe we have all these needs throughout the city and then, you know, as we're searching for pennies to try to find ways to address things. So -- so I guess my first question is does that mean with these 24 vacancies that are created at the -- will we be asked in next year or the next year, now we need 24 more firefighters because we -- we moved those firefighters to fire specialists. >> No, I would not come to council and ask for 20 more additional firefighters because I took 24 firefighters and made them can command techs. I understand the fire department is not the only department within the city that has needs. That's why I made -- in order for to do the command

[10:16:45 AM]

techs, we had to find the money somewhere within our [lapse in audio] But it would be -- I guess disingenuous to come before council to ask to get approval for command techs and then come next year and say by the way, thank you, and can you give me 20 more firefighter -- increase staff by 24. I'm not going to do that. I'm trying to be as transparent and open before council. It's not just credibility of the

fire department, my credibility as chief is on line trying to do a bait and switch. I'm not here to do a bait and switch. >> Garza: I come from a city where there was a similar problem, San Antonio also has [inaudible] For their chiefs. So I understand the importance of it. But as we are, again, you know, prioritizing and as you've stated, chief, you said you used funds as responsible was possible, it's my understanding that

[10:17:46 AM]

right now the staffing for the del valle fire station is funded at a partial year. So it's not -- because the station won't be done until June, so that's why it's funded for the partial year. But that there is an opportunity to staff the -- a temporary station out there and just to remind folks why that would be important is because many -- many people in that community are paying higher insurance rates right now. The only ones in the city, the only area in the the city is paying higher insurance rates because they don't have a station near them. The cost for the rest of the year would be about 900,000. So I would be very interested in the possibility of -- you said it's about 864,000 for the command tech. If we could reallocate that to be able to staff that toll booth because we have

[10:18:47 AM]

people paying higher insurance rates and the quicker we can get them -- that area staffed, the quicker they will be paying less insurance rates. And then possibly postpone or delay the implementation of the command tech. >> Thank you very much for that observation about 900,000 to staff the total -- I have solution to staff the total and no cost. And that was reallocating, as we renovate fire stations we have to temporarily close fire stations and reassign those fire apparatus to different stations throughout the city. The program I put in place or tried to suggest was, for example, when we temporarily close a fire station in a council district and relocate those fire stations for fire apparatus, to move those too toll booth. It's estimated it will cost about \$50,000.

[10:19:48 AM]

\$50,000 to renovate the toll booth to staff the fire apparatus. And then when we get ready to renovate another station, we put that apparatus back to the district it came from and take another fire station from another district and put them at the toll booth. And so apparently our plan was not favorable by some members and so we did not go that route. We still have a meeting he had asked to talk about relocating the apparatus in your district, to serve that district, but I'm well aware the members in that del valle area should have the same level of fire protection and we put forth a plan and it wouldn't cost 900,000. It only costs 50,000. >> Garza: I was disappointed we couldn't figure out something as well. >>

There's still hope. >> Garza: Is there a possibility to staff that -- I mean basically staff that fire station for the entire

[10:20:48 AM]

year and then that staff would be on the the toll Ott into. Are there any other options? >> There are some other options that I need to sit down with you and talk about because it's going to have some impact in your district, to be honest with you, but I have not had an opportunity to talk to you about that. I don't think it would be appropriate to talk about it now without you knowing about it first. Very minimal amount of impact, but I believe it's a win-win. >> Garza: You are on my schedule, I think later this week or next week. Well, I'm very interested -- >> And it won't cost \$900,000. >> Garza: And if there's a way, but otherwise, as you said, it's using our resources as responsible as possible and we've done that with APD in the past. We I guess approved a program but said wait for the funding until we can get some other programs that are really high need right now. So I would appreciate being able to work with you on getting that funding for that fire station.

[10:21:49 AM]

Let me see if I have any other -- just to be clear, so you said that the -- Ed, you said the additional funding for that overtime issue is currently not still in the budget for fire. >> We will reconcile that. Maybe do that as a budget question because it is a complicated equation, but that is my understanding from working with my staff who worked closely with the fire department that the money we put in their budget when their overtime spike was removed, 18 and 19 budgets and beyond that the department identified additional savings to fund this new program without getting additional resources allocated. >> Garza: Okay. Thank you. >> Flannigan: One little nit picky thing because I can't let it go. When I see a map and see stuff left off. You've added the Travis county esd but not the wilco.

[10:22:49 AM]

There's the jollyville, the sambas is missing. I don't know whether you are pulling your maps from, but I want to make sure adjacent fire service in the wilco site is also being looked at. The ones for wilco are missing. I share my colleagues' concerns about this command tech program. Manager, I'm a little confused about it because my expectation was that once we get through this very quick budget cycle, we were going to really look into fire and ems efficiencies. So I'm not sure why -- I mean, I can understand why the chief would recommend it, I'm not sure why it would come into the base budget a fairly significant shift in operations when we're about to entertain a more deeper look. >> Sure, councilmember, that's a fair point. This was something the chief had been talking about since January, I believe. >> Flannigan: Since day one. >> But it came on my radar

[10:23:50 AM]

maybe a couple months after that. And so it had already been part of his desire, his priorities, but to your point, you know, we are going to be looking at the entire spectrum of how we can get more efficiency within fire and ems, but this was more of a timing issue that this was on the radar earlier when the chief started -- >> Flannigan: I'm not prepared to support this change now and I'll be bringing an amendment or councilmember alter, you might be thinking the same thing, to unpack this now because I just think the timing is wrong when we're about to do a deeper dish into the efficiencies of fire and ems. >> I respect that, sir, but I would really encourage -- the power point doesn't tell the story. On the streets tell the story. When it's 3:00 in the morning or 3:00 in the afternoon and you are on a working fire incident, a multiple-story incident, apartment, that's a residential fire, we have firefighters on the scene and the battalion chief

[10:24:51 AM]

listens to several radio operation stations trying to give out orders and trying to coordinate the stage and make assignment, as well as during nonemergency events when the command tech and assists with that training level. The command tech is nothing new in the fire service. It's new to Austin fire, but it's not new to the fire service. This is a very efficient way of enhancing firefighter safety. It's a very efficient way in enhancing the service to the community during nonfire or nonother emergency type of situations. So I mean this is not something I just pulled out the sky or looking for a honeymoon list to throw stuff out there. It's something that I believe that can enhance the operation on emergency and nonemergency of the Austin fire department. And I believe it's in line with the decision-making

[10:25:51 AM]

priority I explained earlier in the presentation and what's best for the city, first. >> Flannigan: I appreciate that, chief. I think the timing is wrong because we need to go through this longer conversation. We heard similar things from the department when we were doing four-person staffing and we were provided a lot of data and a lot of background and we had multiple conversations as a council about four-person staffing. We wrestled with it at council meetings with testimony and the data bore out there were less firefighter injuries on a four-person staffing than not which is why I ended up supporting it. I do not have the information I need to make a decision in this case especially when we're about to do a deeper dive. I appreciate your take, but this is where I'm at. >> Thank you so much. >> Tovo: I appreciate the conversation and mayor pro tem I appreciate the

[10:26:52 AM]

position hold off on the command tech and use that savings to get the resources to Morris crossing. When we talked about Morris crossing, we talked about the two different alternatives of trying to do the toll booth versus creating the new. I supported and was on your resolution to bring forward the resolution to create the new fire station there. I want to step back and say when we had the discussion about -- about the need to do construction in the different fire stations to make sure that they have the facilities they need for their workforce, which includes women, I -- we were told that we had the funding for all of those stations to have temporary stations within -- within their area, and that those -- and it was the assumption those resources would remain in the communities that they currently serve. And so it is -- it will concern me if we're going back to a plan to relocate

[10:27:53 AM]

the resources in some of our densest neighborhoods elsewhere when we have opportunities to look at other ways of getting -- getting the funding that Morris crossing needs. And so I'll just add -- I want to reset that conversation and say if we're going to have a conversation about taking those resources away from certain areas and relocating them when we have other options, then I think that's a much fuller conversation because, you know, even if -- even if those are not being relocated in certain districts, it impacts it because, you know, the station that I know you were contemplating relocating equipment from in my district also serves as a backup for P. -- For pios and others. I think it deserves a much fuller conversation. I'm going to support, mayor pro tem, if you bring forth that and reallocate them I'm

[10:28:54 AM]

going to support that. >> Thank you. >> Councilmember alter. >> Alter: Thank you. I appreciate being able to have this discussion to better understand the operational needs. I think it would be helpful if we had a sense of the number of incidents where you would need those command tech addition happening. Part of why I think we're looking at the ems, fire efficiencies is the vast majority of our calls are ems. And so I don't have at my fingertips those numbers, and so if you can either tell me them now or you can provide as backup to try to understand how often you would be needing to deploy with this driving capability to get to the incident, that would be helpful, as my first question, and you can either provide that now or get back to me.

[10:29:54 AM]

>> Yes, ma'am. For fiscal year 18, I do have before me, we had approximately 87,000 incidents. Of those incidents, approximately 900 were actual structural fire calls, although the department was dispatched to about 1200 fire calls, but only 900 actually fighting the fire. We had approximately 3,000 other dispatch fire-related calls, grass fire, car fire, and approximately 2,000 of those calls were actually fires. We have approximately 47,000 medical calls. What would those command tech do on those fire calls is close to 2,000 actually fire incident calls. But all across the country the fire is down across the country which is great, but ems continues to rise as the aging population gets older in every city across America, including the city of Austin. So we go on more and more medical calls. The battalion chiefs do not normally respond on medical calls, per se, but there's

[10:30:56 AM]

other nonemergency incident where the command tech support which I talked about earlier, training. >> If I could add one piece of information to that. So your medical calls oftentimes last just a number of minutes. So though the number may be higher, the duration of time and the number of personnel required is a lot smaller. For your fire incidences, they may be lower in number. Those last a very extended period of time, up to hours and trying to manage the scene, the initial emergency on the front side, the cleanup at the end and trying to get the resident into some sort of forward direction as they try to put their lives back together. The duration of that is a lot longer. When you look at just the data, just the numbers, it doesn't equate to what's actually done on scene. And the requirement of resources to support the activities that are occurring. >> Alter: Thank you. So in any given case, we have four-person staffing

[10:31:57 AM]

and now we need another two -- I mean, when we had this conversation about four-person staffing, it was never brought up you also have this other person that comes out and maybe I should have known that but I'm not a firefighter, it just seems like every call that they go out on, they have four-person staffing and then it just seems like there's more and more people that are going out. And when we try and staff this across the city, we have to make tradeoffs like the one that mayor pro tem Garza brought up about Morris crossing and I'm just not sure that I have the information to be able to do that. I did want to just briefly comment, I don't think we've had a full discussion as a council about the tradeoffs with Morris crossing, and it sounds like you have an opportunity to have a discussion with mayor pro tem Garza about, you know, a restaffing opportunity within our district that gets us from here to may and I encourage

[10:32:59 AM]

that happening. I'm not comfortable with temporarily staffing that up with overtime staff, you know, in the interim without a full discussion of all the options for the full council to consider. I know that there are some stations that are right smack in the middle of the city and do have overlap with lots of districts that might be impacted, and I'm just -- I haven't had a full discussion of that so it's hard for me to understand the tradeoffs, but at this point without that, I wouldn't be able to support moving that funding to Morris crossing, though I would be supportive of 50, \$100,000 if we could manage to do that sooner in another -- in another manner. >> Yes, ma'am. >> Mayor pro tem? >> Garza: Just for clarification, what I was suggesting wasn't overtime, it's just funding the new station for the full year. And then half that year those people are at the --

[10:34:00 AM]

they are not overtime. They are being staffed for the full year instead of half a year. >> Right, but we don't have the firefighters, just like we don't have the police for the police positions that we're talking about. Those firefighters aren't already sworn in. >> They are. >> Alter: So it's other firefighters that are - >> They have to be because they will be ready to staff the station in June. >> Alter: Are you staffing in June with -- I mean isn't there some overtime in the system that's happening in order to staff in June. >> For the Morris crossing station? >> Alter: Yes. >> I want to reallocate a fire apparatus. >> The direction we were given for station 50 at Morris crossing is that the funding to staff it would not be available till the station was built. So we don't currently have the -- with the funding of it would come the promotions to put the officers, drivers, et cetera there.

[10:35:01 AM]

That has not been put in place. We were told those had to hold until the station was open. That was the direction we were given. >> Alter: What I'm trying to understand and maybe I'm misunderstanding it, but it was my understanding those firefighters were part of the vacancy process and you may be moving them and they would be there full time, but somewhere else in the system those folks would then be coming out of and having to be staffed up by overtime. Because it's not my understanding we have solved our vacancy rate to the point that we are, you know, when we -- that we don't have any overtime to make up short comings in staff and that has been authorized. >> I'm not sure I'm following, but my proposal is not to have overtime to temporarily staff Morris crossing. I just want to relocate a apparatus that can still cover the area.

[10:36:02 AM]

Crossing of services. >> Alter: But if you are reallocating it, why does it cost additional money? >> Because I need to renovate the toll booth. >> Alter: Right, but in may you would be going into the new

station, and if you are saying you are reallocating money, then you are reallocating apparatus and there's no new money, why do you need new money if there's not some additional costs somewhere -- >> The money come in once the fire station is open, then we need the personnel to fully staff that station. I'm talking about since we're doing some renovation of various fire stations, just relocate apparatus -- I got to move them anyway. I've got to find somewhere for these apparatus to go. >> Alter: My question was about when we staff in may, do we have enough firefighters that we are full-time staffing that or is there something in the system where somebody else is getting their staffing done by overtime

[10:37:04 AM]

firefighters? Because my understanding of our vacancies is we don't have enough firefighters that we have solved our vacancy problem and we can have 30 new firefighters put on by the time we get there. So if you allocate -- let's say we had 100, I'm making this up, but if we had 100 vacant firefighter position and now you are saying we need 30 for Morris crossing, we haven't got 130 firefighters to fill all those vacancies. You still have that 100 that are vacant even if you solve that 30, and so somebody is getting a firefighter that's on overtime. >> Right. I understand that, ma'am. I apologize for that. We will begin a recruit class this October and that class is expected to graduate around may or June of this year. So once we fill those 56 vacancies, I think it's 56 vacancies. >> [Inaudible]. >> So the current 56 vacancies. But once we complete that firefighter training, then

[10:38:06 AM]

we will have that workforce to move in. We may miss it -- everything happens, vacation, weather go bad, can train, there's so many variables right now. Training starts in October of this year, projected to be finished around may or June of next year. The station is scheduled to be open I think may or June next year. If the stars line up, and we won't, but if they did, they will be able to move right in. With minimal amount of overtime. I cannot say there won't be no overtime impact because there will be promotion at opportunity. Firefighters make fire specialists, lieutenants make captains. We'll increase our calls more firefighter vacancies. >> Alter: But you also have vacancies that cool over the course of the year and I don't know what the rate is in fire. If you can get us the data so we can see that just like

[10:39:07 AM]

we did with APD, that would be helpful. I haven't had the opportunity that mayor pro tem has had to look at it in detail for that station, so I apologize if I'm asking the wrong questions, but it's my understanding that we still -- overtime. >> I think I understand your question. Have we considered the rate of -- the rates of retirements, considered the station coming online, yes, we have, and we do have a

schedule. Also brings in the graduating class. >> Alter: Thank you. >> Garza: Councilmember Ellis. >> Ellis: I have a question about how long it would take to train up somebody. Is it something people are ready to do or would it be a bit of delay because they need 12 weeks to do that particular duty? >> We currently have a pilot program in place. The training would be on the job Troy on-the-job training, if you will, with the chief officers and the operations chiefs officer and some of

[10:40:08 AM]

those members who went to visiting cities to see how the command tech program would work along with a job description program. I won't need to send them all somewhere. >> Ellis: Would their pay increases if we approve the funding happen October 1 or would there be some delay in kind of making -- implementing the program. >> My understanding the pay would increase the day they start the position. >> I'm sorry, can you repeat that question? >> Ellis: If we were to approve implementing this program, when would the pay raises change? I'm trying to understand if these numbers are calculated for an entire fiscal year or 11 out of 12 months or some other -- >> I'm trying to think. I believe we calculated for the entire year, ma'am. Effective October. >> Ellis: Okay. I just wanted to -- >> The program would be effective October. >> Ellis: -- Kind of think through that. A couple other councilmembers touched on the four-person staffing, but if you were to shift

[10:41:08 AM]

employment in your way, would it affect your ability to maintain the four-person staffing? >> It would not impact drastically the four-person staffing. But in the event it did, two years down the road, we see we just can't maintain it and we have to go back, we would cut the program. But I don't think that's going to happen. >> Ellis: Okay. I think that answers it. >> Garza: Councilmember Renteria. >> Renteria: Yes, you are saying you are going to have to close some of the stations for remodeling and you are going to have to put these units at another location. Have you all thought about any other location besides Morris crossing? >> We are working on trying to -- for those council districts that have fire station renovation, and we have a temporary and only temporarily close those stations due to renovation of stations. Our plan today is to relocate those fire stations

[10:42:09 AM]

with inside their own district. For example, we have district 1 that have a station need to be renovated, I will go to keep that apparatus of the station within district 1 but relocate them either to another fire station or to another private property or piece of property we can rent or borrow and put up a trailer. We're currently doing that right now. So in other words, if we temporarily close the station, the station remain in that service district but not in -- in a different location. >> Renteria: How long do they normally

close a fire station there? >> Depending on the construction. If we build a new fire station, for example, it may be ten months to a year possibly. But renovating a bathroom anywhere from six weeks to three months -- six months? Anywhere from six weeks to six months depending on the renovation that's taking place. >> Renteria: Okay. Thank you. >> Garza: Councilmember

[10:43:10 AM]

kitchen. >> Kitchen: I just wanted to make sure I understood the answer to councilmember Ellis' question because I wasn't sure I heard you right. On the four-person staffing, did you say that it wouldn't affect it? Is that what I heard you say? >> I'm saying if we are approved to move forward with the command tech, it would not impact the four-person staffing. We're still going to do four-person staffing. >> Kitchen: But I thought I heard you say something about if it does -- >> I said in the event something goes south, the budget goes bad, something happens I don't have control over -- >> Kitchen: Something else other than this. >> If I have to disband that program for whatever reason, that will be one of the first programs we dispanned to enhance the four-person staffing. I don't project anything happening, but I don't know what the economy holds in the future. >> Kitchen: Okay. I think I heard that you said. At this point there's no

[10:44:10 AM]

impact on the four-person staffing, there's no planning, there's no plan or thought to pull back on the four-person staffing. >> Absolutely not. >> Kitchen: Okay. >> Garza: Councilmember tovo. >> Tovo: This may actually be a question for the city manager, but yesterday I met with the medical director and I know that they are applying for a grant to look at general -- to kind of generally analyze response times and the costs of responding to ems -- to medical calls on -- from fire versus ems. And so I was just looking through the presentation that I had here that talks about the response -- it's called response configuration efficiencies. I don't know if everybody has received the same prexes, but the costs in 2018 for responding to medical calls for ems was

[10:45:11 AM]

\$710, for AFD, 2,307. As I understood and I'm summarizing my take-waste from the meeting, part of that grant is to look at to really enhance triage and dispatch possibilities. I guess I too wonder how that plan fits into this sort of new program for AFD or whether it wouldn't make sense to get this analysis back first before we -- before we move in a direction on it changing the staffing or -- doing the command tech program. >> Councilmember, picking up on the previous conversation with councilmember Flannigan, these are critical discussions we're having as a community, especially with the new limitations

we have on raising our general fund revenue through the tax caps. As part of this budget, I have asked our assistant social security manager to really think -- city manager to think through our

[10:46:12 AM]

efficiency and that study would be part of that conversation, but this is also timing. This was a program that was made apparent by our chief when he came on board and moving forward with that, obviously we're going to continue to keep that into conversation as we look at this other analysis that will be happening, but whether what happens before the other -- one happens before the other, the departments have to run and we have to make sure we are responding to residents as we need to. And so we will be taking many things into consideration as part of that analysis, including for potential of this command tech program if it were approved. >> If I may, there was a study done a few years ago with a previous medical director. We have medical calls go from priority 5, 4, 3, 2, 1. Five is the least serious to one being the most serious. And the length of the data did a power point and on there the short summary of

[10:47:13 AM]

it was the fives, fours and a good portion of the these, so the less serious of the medical calls were less likely to have a medical transport. Not go by ambulance. And with that data it was shared not only with the Austin fire department but all of the esds in Travis county so they could look at that to make decisions. I think what you are referring to because there is a cost every time a apparatus moves, and where is the best efficiencies for that. And from that adjustments were made. The Austin fire department does not go on priority 5 or 4 calls. Then on the priority 3s, it was the cad at dispatch if there's going to be delay of more than five minutes for an ems ambulance to arrive, then we are dispatched as well. So there's some things in there that were done specifically for the savings that I think you are alluding to. With anything there's always the opportunity to look at those again, but those were

[10:48:15 AM]

done a few years ago. >> Tovo: Thanks. As I understood the conversation yesterday, there is an intent, and the manager just confirmed it, to do that kind of analysis again. And so that was the substance of my question whether -- whether, again, just to pick up my colleagues, whether we launch into this at the same time we're doing an efficiency study to look at how this -- how best to move forward. >> Garza: I know we have a meeting scheduled, I believe it's tomorrow, but I'm really concerned if we are moving in a direction where we're splitting up our city by districts and reallocating our engines and resources. And basically asking councilmembers, you got to find something within your own district if you want to -- even though I feel like that is your call and your expertise to be able to know where to reallocate,

[10:49:15 AM]

you know, where there's overlap, where there's more fire stations because that would -- it seems it would be unfair for the pivotal ial districts who have less fire stations and more area to cover to be asked to reallocate within their own districts. I hope we didn't move in a direction where because of -- I understand concerns from other councilmembers about moving resources, but the fire department has done this in the past. There have been -- in my recollection, if a station is closing for renovations, there has not been a temporary station set up right there. They have moved to an entirely different station. Isn't that true? Stations have moved to other stations in the past during renovations. >> That is correct. In the past we didn't have other options and so whenever a station was closed -- I work at station 3, and station 2 was closed for renovation on the south

[10:50:17 AM]

side of -- for renovation. We moved engine 2 to station 3 and the response calls were done for both stations out of that particular station. The -- in the past year or so we've acquired the ability to get just a couple trailers, and where we're able, an example could be station 29, which is in south Austin off of deer lane. Just south of Brodie lane to give you a general idea. The property for that station is huge. With that we were able to put a trailer on that station's property and so the firefighters simply moved out of the fire station into this trailer and the trailer had all the proper accommodation while the station was being renovated. There's other stations where the footprint is very small, and with that there's not the ability to co-locate a trailer on to that property. And as you all have tackled with the immense growth of the city of Austin, there's not a lot of available real

[10:51:19 AM]

estate in many parts of the city where we're able to relocate. We've had great suggestions, some from y'all to look into for opportunities to use one piece of property or other. There are limitations because P the the trailer has a sizable footprint, you need to have the utilities hooked up, ability to properly secure the fire apparatus. The doors don't lock on the vast majority of them so you need fencing around which means you block off more space. We've had examples including renting a house but the apparatus does not fit on the driveway or would destroy the driveway because of the weight. Fencing takes away from the residents ability to move. We've looked at a vast number of options which didn't exist before. We didn't have trailers prior to a year ago. So it is a tool in the toolbox, but the reality is it doesn't always work. There's a lot of limitations

[10:52:20 AM]

to the use of it and it has been a past practice for certain where we've had to close a station for renovation and that unit went to another station based on -- some was availability. If the station only had one bit and only fit one apparatus, you couldn't fit a second one there. You had to find something that worked. We have made adjustments in the past. >> Those decisions are not based on district boundary lines, they are based on a variety of other factors. >> Garza: That's what I thought I heard and I was worried we were going to start allocating fire within each district. I think this council there was a lot of concern about -- what was the word about 10-1, word politics, and we've been -- I think we've been good about understanding resource should go where needed at that time regardless of district lines. I hope we don't move in that direction. But I think councilmember alter, you wanted to move on to wildfire. Did you have a question -- >> Casar: I think you

[10:53:21 AM]

covered it, I just wanted to reiterate it's not any one member or one corner of the city. I think be it parks or police or fire or watershed, that our district lines are drawn for very particular reasons to have 80 to 1,000 people in them. They are not boundaries reflective of fire risks or boundaries reflective of where flooding happens. And I will always say, you know, if there is less flooding in my district than somewhere else, more watershed money should go there. If there is more wildfire risk in some other part of town than my own, then more wildfire protection should go there and I think that's just an important culture to have is keep reiterating that. That's an important thing for us to build in in the first five, six, eight years of the system.

[10:54:21 AM]

>> Garza: Councilmember tovo. >> Tovo: I completely agree and I think my votes have always reflected that even when I'm on the losing end of losing the sidewalk 50% equal distribution, which I didn't think responded and followed that philosophy. I just want to be clear that what you're describing in the past was an interest in relocating within a very close proximity. The difference here is that some of those proposals were relocating from outside. It didn't matter what district it was in, but it was very -- it was not being relocated within close proximity. And so, you know, correct? >> That's correct. >> Tovo: So I think it is competingly important that as we have those conversations that that is abundantly clear. That we are, you know, we don't want to be in a position of saying, you know, we've made made a creditment to make sure Morris crossing gets the commitment and suddenly

[10:55:22 AM]

after we made that commitment the answer to do that is by taking resources out of other communities to make that happen, because that was not part of the conversation, that was not the expectation and it wasn't the expectation when we embarked on the very necessary renovations that the equipment at those stations that were under renovation were going to be relocated outside their community. >> Oh, that. >> Tovo: And so that is why I'm going to continue to support getting -- getting the resources down to Morris crossing as soon as possible, but by using other means of doing it. Along the lines of what we've talked with the command tech program. >> Thank you. >> Garza: I have just curious when the current driver list expire. >> I'm sorry? >> Garza: The current driver promotional list expires. >> It was a fresh list I think the first part of August and it's good for two years. >> Garza: So if this program were delayed a year, you would have the same

[10:56:25 AM]

list? >> I believe we would have the same list. >> Garza: Okay. Thanks. Councilmember alter. >> Alter: Are there no more questions about command tech? Move to wildfire. Thank you. Just for the record, I passed out to each councilmember their district's profile that I posted about last night on the message board and the chief contacted you about last week. As a council body, we haven't had an opportunity to really dive into what the wildfire risk is that we face as a community, and I really encourage each of you to reach out to the chief and get a meeting with him and the wildland division to understand the risks in your district and for the city as a whole. I'll have some questions for the chief, but, you know, with respect to wildfire, it is really a question of if -- is when not if with

[10:57:26 AM]

respect to when we have a wildfire. And we have essentially a large ring around the city of high risk, and we have been looking carefully, my office, to understand whether we are prepared for the level of risk. We just received an audit in audit and finance which we sent back because it didn't answer the question of the audit. The audit was asking us whether we are prepared for the risks that we face with respect to wildfire. Instead we were presented with an audit that did have some concrete suggestions like the land management for the parks and preserves and the wui code but basically said we were doing the best we could with the resources we had. It did not provide us with the scope of the risk and whether what we were doing was meeting that. We've had no additional funding over the last two cycles put into the budget

[10:58:27 AM]

last year and this proposed budget, and the risk is very, very high. And I have been trying to get us to have a conversation and a briefing and have not succeeded in getting that on our agenda with everything else we have, but I want to call your attention to this so that you are aware of the risks. The other thing I wanted to mention it's my understanding that there are, you know, tens of thousands of structures in our community that are at risk. Each of those structures that is in the high-risk area is paying higher insurance for their casualty insurance because of the risk of wildfire and because we are not doing everything that we can for that. We're working to quantify those numbers, but that is also something that we're having. So I wanted to start by asking the fire department if you could speak to your assessment of the risk of wildfire. We're now on, I think, day

[10:59:29 AM]

28 of over 100-degree weather. What's the risk of wildfire here in Austin area? >> Thank you, councilmember. >> Thank you, councilmember alter. My name is Richard Davis. I manage the wildfire division among other things. You mentioned what is the risk besides wildfire pieces. The risk is high. I don't know if you guys are familiar with a study that was done by then assistant chief Kevin baum in 2003 that was financed by FEMA, the federal emergency management agency, so discuss the risk of wildfire. We've made some steps moving forward to mitigate some of the risks, but there's still a lot to do. The risk is not going away. I think depending upon what study you look at, Austin's risk is probably rated number one or two in the country and we're making steps to do a lot of fuel mitigation, fuel breaks,

[11:00:30 AM]

prescribed burns, increasing our staffing and resources moving forward. >> Alter: So when you say we're at high risk and one of the top three ranked for risk in the country, what is that risk? I mean, we're at high risk of having the wildfire, but what is that risk? >> Well, basically the risk relates to how we as a community are spreading into the urban interface. As you know Austin is getting busier, Moore people moving here and we are moving out into the urban interface and with that comes the risk of wildfires. Human behavior comes into play. Sometimes there are natural elements that come into play and it's like a domino effect. If the risk is not mitigated, meaning like the urban brush, et cetera, it's not trimmed up with the shaded fuel breaks, then that becomes a domino effect that can effect from west to east, north to south as far

[11:01:30 AM]

as the wildfire moving forward. >> Think about what we're saying. Yes, the risk is high for wildland fire, but yes, the Austin police department has a plan, are doing things. We have controlled burning that's

taking place. We have the woove code that's coming up for country September 19th. We have the training -- every firefighter in Austin on the basic level of fighting wildland fire. We have relationship with our outside partners to come in and to help us fight the wildfire when that event happens. So although we have a high risk due to the growth of the city and due to the area, the wildfire areas, but we have plans in place to minimize and capitalize on those risks to mitigate when the incident happens. >> Alter: So chief, I'm not questioning whether we're doing the best we can with the resources that we have or already are invested in this. What I am still struggling

[11:02:34 AM]

to understand and to make sure that we as a dais understand is what is the magnitude of the risk and do we have enough resources there? So can you honestly tell me that we are the absolute best that we can at this point in time to address the risk or are there some small things that we could be doing that would improve our ability to respond? >> Yes, absolutely small things can be done. For example, during the mitigation we currently hire part-time staff to come in with the undercut and the burns area. We continue to do training in the area. We have some of what I call the best employees in dealing with wildland fire. Justin Jones one of our civilian employees, is one of them. No matter what we do, there's always room for improvement in every area of the Austin fire department, including the wildland fire subdivision. So there are other things

[11:03:35 AM]

that can be done and we are doing. I sent out what you have before you, the hazard for every council district and we are currently scheduling to meet with all the councilmembers to sit down and talk about what's taking place in their particular district, and the city as a whole as far as wildland fire hazard is concerned. >> Chief Davis, can you walk us through when we talk about what we're doing, there are multiple ways that we address wildfire. One is to address publicly owned city lands, one is to work with the private. Can you communicate what we're actually doing on the ground. There were statistics shared with audit and finance that really give a sense of how Lile we're doing and I'd like for you to walk us through that and share the magnitude of what we're not doing. >> Yeah. Like he said, we're doing a lot of work with a lot of other entities, a lot of other departments as it relates to wildfire. Austin energy, parks and rec come to mind, Austin water

[11:04:36 AM]

utility as a coalition moving forward a united front. We're doing a lot when there are prescribed burns. We're doing a lot when it comes to fuel mitigations. Some of the things when we talk about mitigation project type, which is defensible space, reducing or moving or reducing the flammable vegetation,

replacing flammable vegetation with less flammable species, clearing out with all applicable codes and best practices. All this in effect reduces the risk by roughly 10% as it relates to the effectiveness of the activity as it relates to wildfire. I don't have those stats that you talked about in front of me that you alluded to, but we are collectively moving forward and try to do as best we can to mitigate the risk when it comes to wildfire in the community. >> Alter: So when we do mitigation, though, we can only do this on publicly owned lands that are city-owned lands and we are

[11:05:37 AM]

targeting areas that are within 150 feet of a structure. If you take all of that land which we could treat in that way, so that's not looking at anything too much denser than the 150 as I understand it, we are only treating about 11% of what we can be treating. >> That is correct. Yes, ma'am, that is correct. Right now there are 97-point it 7 miles treatment zone that bound the city of Austin property and you are correct in your assessment we are doing roughly about 11% as it stands now. For the last -- since three years. The last three years. >> Alter: And the audit also revealed that we were doing nothing in our preserves. >> That is also correct because -- >> Alter: Which are not counted in that 1200 miles? >> Yes, ma'am. Because in those types of situations in the preserves we are talking with the federal units that are in charge of the reserves and we are moving along in a coalition fashion, collaborating, cooperating. This includes residents.

[11:06:38 AM]

We talk to them on how to best protect their area and how to best do landscaping, et cetera, to protect their residences. Even though we're not actually working in some of these areas we are doing community outreach type effects that kind of impact and hopefully gets the people to pay attention as far as wildland is concerned. >> Alter: So as far as my colleagues, we have the publicly owned land, we are dealing with 11% of the areas we could treat, not counting the other land that could be affected by wildfire. And we have the privately owned land which connect only effect by creating these firewise community outreach activities. We currently don't have Austin resource recovery services out in most of the high risk areas. We have cut off the brush service when we combined with esd 4 so we have communities that are right now not receiving any ability to get rid of their brush, been trained to remove their brush and have no resources devoted to

[11:07:41 AM]

removing that brush. If you take a look at some of your maps of the fire wise communities, because we have very limited staffing for the programming community, it is not equitably distributed who has a firewise community. As I mentioned before, we have a ring around our whole community, but we do not

have fire wise communities on the the east side of town. It stakes staff to do that. Right now they have been working with the communities that have been coming forward and have people identified, but we have an equity issue with respect to how this is playing out in the other communities that could be resolved by additional staffing to do that community outreach and other kinds of things. I have more to say, but I know I have some other colleagues who want to also ask questions so I will yield the floor. >> One of the challenges that I have heard from the

[11:08:43 AM]

community is the areas on the edge activity where we're -- even in the maps obviously a lot of wildfire risk beyond the city's limits that are not under AFD's authority. And I brought this up at the capcog meeting because I represent the city on the executive committee there about adding wildfire risk to capcog's disaster planning efforts. There was a lot of effort there around flooding, but they cannot put any effort into wildfires. So we're getting that integrated into the regional system, but what I heard from some folks is the adjacent esd's have different strategies and approaches to wildfire mitigation, which is what kind of raised my concern because I don't have any kind of purchase over how they approach it. Are you experiencing anything like that about how there is some debate about lands -- the wildfire is not going to respect a

[11:09:44 AM]

jurisdictional line. >> No, sir, I have not heard that sentiment from the esd's. >> Flannigan: I'll bring that to you later as to not throw anyone under the bus here live on TV. I share councilmember alter alter's concerns, especially on the preserves. I feel like there's more that we can be doing and I want to make sure that the department is leveraging my office and councilmember alter's office and councilmember Ellis's office, we have the highest wildfire risk of the districts, to make sure that we're appropriately working with our colleagues at the county what happened have very substantial responsibility over preserve land as well and all the preserve stuff tends to be a partnership between these two. Also with the relationship with some of our neighborhoods have some resources of their own that

[11:10:44 AM]

I want to make sure is compatible with the work that's being done. Some of those neighborhoods being recently annexed may have a difficult relationship with the city and I would hate for that to be at cross purposes with the wildfire risk we were doing. I don't know what the right amount of money is to put into wildfire mitigation I don't know that this is enough. It certainly doesn't sound like enough when it's 11% of the area. I hope this is part of our ongoing conversation with efficiencies. We could put money in a bucket, but I don't know what that would actually accomplish on this moment but I don't want it to go

another year where we're not having an audit that comes back that's much more comforting to my constituents and our constituents that have some severe wildfire risk. And my last question may not

[11:11:45 AM]

be one that you have an answer, but I would like to know more specifically if it's not the fire department or if it's the planning department or if it's development services or it's somebody who can clearly explain the difference in risk of wildfire depending on the level and intensity of development. So we know that as the region has sprawled there is property that we can't stop from developing. The property rights are such that we can't stop development. We can determine some case of the scale of that development. It's not clear to me that a development that has 50 homes or 60 homes or 70 homes or 80 homes is that much different when it comes to wildfire risk, but I have not yet been able to get a clear answer because no one seems to want to take the authority of that question. I really would like to know more about how staff thinks across departments about this reality? And when I talk to my constituents who live in these areas they get very frustrated when they see development, but it's always

[11:12:46 AM]

this very difficult conversation between well, it would be better if nobody built anything. Which yeah, we would love to have bigger preserves, but the city doesn't have the power to say no, so how do we better interpret wildfire risk and in terms of not -- no development, but levels of development. >> Ellis: I echo the sentiments of my fellow councilmembers. Coming from southwest Austin, not a point of my district is in the single range. I appreciate you trying to keep everybody safe. I know Travis country is one of the areas with a longer than eight minute response time which is concerning when thinking about how close it is to the wildlandlands. So I would like more information about I see in your report what programming is being done and where it's being done, but I feel like I need a little more

[11:13:46 AM]

information on timeline so that if people are calling me with questions I'm able to kind of get ahead of that and make sure that people know what's going on in their neighborhood, making sure when you are doing underbrush clearing that people are aware of these processes taking place but I would feel a lot better if less of my district were in the high risk. 58% is an extremely high risk for wildfire. Portions of it when affected in 2011, including oak hill and parts of mopac where they caught fire. And I would also like to see more overlap or potentially have the discussion offline about how we talk to private multi-family businesses, apartment complexes or other relationships like leasing and renting homes because I don't know that I've seen snuff on the outside of making sure people understand that they might be

inadvertently creating a risk and give them the information to make sure that the buildings are safe. I know my apartment building

[11:14:47 AM]

was very close to dead bamboo on the side of a highway that had caught fire in 2011 and luckily they were able to solve the problem quickly, but it wasn't -- it was potentially very, very dangerous for the people living there and I just want to make sure that we're getting all the information we need. We're very supportive of identifying where we need to beef up because I think we would all like to see that number higher than 11%. It's kind after blessing and a church of having a beautiful tree canopy. You have to be aware and conscious of the work that needs to be done to make sure that we don't end up with a wildfire spreading, especially in a district like mine. >> Absolutely. >> Mayor Adler: Pio? >> Renteria: I agree with all of you that we need to do some more. My frustration when I see the development going on there in the west area is the resistance to have

[11:15:47 AM]

connectivity. When you only have one way out of a canyon when there are a bunch of trees there that can catch on fire, you're putting yourself at risk also. That's a big thing that I have seen. Circle C is one thing that I have seen that could catch on fire because there's only one way in and out of that place. And we need to realize that we need some alternative routes out of that, escape routes. We need people to get serious about what the possibility that might happen out there. And I would hate to see that. Like you said, it's a beautiful area there. I've gone out there and taken a look and seen what beautiful sights. I can see how it's getting developed all the way up to even -- pass the 620. And it just -- it's just booming out there, just amazing. I know there will be a problem out there one of these days where we'll have a fire that is going to be

[11:16:49 AM]

very hard to control because of all the houses that are being built out there. So we need to make sure that people can get out of that area when something like that will happen because it will. It's just a matter of time when one of those homes catch on fire and it ignites everything else around it. >> Mayor Adler: Alison. I didn't see your light on. >> I have some questions related to the firewise communities. So I'm concerned that -- I'm concerned with the questions that have been raised about the extent to which fire wise communities exist throughout the city, particularly on -- throughout the city. So I'd like to -- and just as a note for district 5 we don't appear to have engaged fire wise communities in the

[11:17:49 AM]

highest risk areas. So what is the -- I want to understand better the process for engaging communities and becoming a fire wise community. Is there a proactive outreach or -- do you have the resources to engage in proactive outreach? So that would be one question. Another question would be what is y'all's thinking in terms I don't have it is that -- in terms of why it is that the communities that are at the high and elevated areas don't have fire wise? They're not even engaged. You've got two categories, which I assume means engaged working towards firewise and active. Is it a matter of resources that there aren't the resources to proactively outreach to all these communities? Or is there some other issue?

[11:18:51 AM]

>> I would say councilmember in answer to your question it's probably both. I think the reason that some of these neighborhoods are not engaged engaged is that basically because some don't want to be involved. And I think that's where our part comes in as far as educating the community. I know that we had some talks with Austin energy roughly about two weeks ago where they talked about getting access and building corridors behind neighbors' houses. And the fact that the neighborhood didn't want anything to do with it. A lot of people live in Austin, they like to have their trees thick and the brush behind their houses because it gives a greenbelt t5 effect. But I think our job is to educate them, to get them to understand that you can have the greenbelt within reason. I think that the safety issue should outweigh the comfort issue in some respects. But it's a matter of getting people to understand. I know that we've worked with a lot of neighborhood

[11:19:52 AM]

associations. We have the wildfire coalition, an annual event that we put on every year and we invite all neighborhoods, all firewise type communities, we spread the word. It's an opportunity to educate all the neighborhoods about what firewise is all about, what wildfire is all about and what we can do to ensure a safe community. >> Kitchen: So what does it take to get a designation as a firewise community? This may be wrong, but is it that the community has to develop a plan for their area? >> Right. >> Kitchen: And that there's a process by which that community, whether it's a neighborhood association or some other aspect of that community, that works with the fire department to go through a series of planning to actually get that designation, is that right? >> Right. You're spot on. For like the past six months, for example, and some of the work we've done is on our website, we've treated 61 acres in the past six months, meaning we've

[11:20:53 AM]

done prescribed burns. We've done 11.1 acres, treated with mechanical projects, which is the shaded fuel breaks, and done 31 community engagements. In addition to that 15 Austin community wildfire protection plans, we've worked with that. So in the last six months we've been very busy with our staff now. This is what we're working in as far as resources. Could there be improvement? Yes. There's always room for improvement. >> Kitchen: Okay. So a last question. I would like to see, and maybe it's in what you gave us, Ed, and I just haven't seen it. I would like to see for each one of the high and elevated communities whether there's been outreach to them. In other words, what is the status of their fire wise process? Has there been any communication? Have they said no have they not been outreached too? In other words, I want to

[11:21:55 AM]

understand on the continuum of developing a fire wise plan for that community, where are they? >> I can get you that information. >> Kitchen: That would be very helpful. And then I would also like to understand what do we need? What do you guys need to actually make it possible for more of the places in our community to have a fire wise plan? >> Yes, ma'am. We'll get you that information. >> Mayor Adler: Alison. >> Alter: I have a couple of questions, but before I get to that I wanted to clarify a couple of things. First of all, I believe that the fire department is doing the best they can with the resources that they have. And I raise the equity issues as a matter of needing more resources. I don't think this is intentional on with anyone's part. They have very, very limited resources but it is something we need to pay attention to and whether we need to devote additional

[11:22:55 AM]

resources. For any of my colleagues that want to connect up your communities with firewise you can obviously do it through them, but there's a very active group of folks, some of whom are leaders in my community who are happy to help mentor other communities through the process. I will just underscore it's my understanding that firewise process is national, but it is adapted considerably for our area because we have a different type of fire risk. Unlike I believe in California our trees explode when you go through the wildfire because of the oils that are in there. And when that happens it means there's a lot of skipping to other structures and other things and things play out somewhat differently. So there are adaptations that have to take place to that. So folks really need to go through the city of Austin's resources, not the national for kind of their resources. At least annually if not more.

[11:23:55 AM]

There's a fire conference that the city participates in with the county or runs. I've had staff go to that. I encourage to you have your staff involved and if you have communities that want to be involved, we've been trying to, you know, work with our communities and get other communities involved and we'd be happy to share a little bit about what we've been doing in that. The other thing that I wanted to clarify is when we talk about we're only doing 11%, I just want to be really clear, we're doing 11% of the treatable land that is public land that is within 150 feet of the structure. We are not treating 11% of the high wildfire risk areas. I just-- I know that you understand that. I just want to make sure that that's clear that that is -- and we're not doing the preserves. And then there's a whole lot that has to happen on people's kind of properties. I wanted to ask about the interdepartmental coordination. Do we have designated people in the different departments who are interfacing with wildfire issues as the liaison?

[11:24:56 AM]

>> Yes, ma'am. For the Austin fire department, it's myself and justice Jones, and he's the one that's been able to talk with a lot of other city departments and work with them, and Sheri Kuhl from the Austin water department and we've had considerable cooperation with a lot of entities and I think we've made a lot of movement as far as the collaboration and cooperation moving forward. >> Alter: Is that cooperation formalized or someone has an interest to do that? >> Right now we have an interlocal agreement that's moving forward in a is on the chief's desk that formalizes that relationship as you say. You should be hopefully seeing that within the coming month -- within the month for council's approval on that. >> >> Alter: So I'm trying to GU O wrehat amendments to bring with respect to additional wildfire resources, and there's a

[11:25:56 AM]

menu of things that we could invest in. So we have the preserves and we'll definitely be working on that. I know councilmember pool has also put that out. But we can talk about community outreach, a program manager, we can talk about gis. We could talk about evacuation planning. We could talk about interdepartmental stuff. We could talk about AFD training. There's lots of different ways to do this. And I really feel that if we put additional -- we did the land management that is about -- I think the figure was about 220,000 for that. I may have that number wrong. And then we put some money into the gis analyst and some other staff with the community. We may be able to get good progress for the next step, be in a better position to evaluate additional recommendations. I also would love that if we do move forward with the workforce program that we're talking about that we could really consider whether there's a royal for those

[11:26:58 AM]

workforce programs to have AFD supervisors talking to them about how to do the fuel mitigation and supervising that, but some of that work doesn't need to be done by our highest train personnel. It does need to be overseen so it's done in an environmentally correct and a firewise manner, but if some of that personnel could be used for that, Mr. Flannigan, I appreciate the outreach with capcog and would love to build on that with you. And perhaps, chief baker, we could drill down to what from your perspective would be the most important investments that we could be making in that. I appreciate that the wild land urban interface code will be coming I guess in September. That will be before us and that is a really critical

[11:27:59 AM]

step that was recommended by the audit that we as a council can adapt which basically meets in those high risk areas. You need to have building materials that are going to withstand more of the fire, which helps us over time to mitigate that risk. I think that's a really critical step. It's my understanding that as of now that will be covered by fees that will be involved so we don't need additional budgetary stuff, but I just want folks to be looking for that. That is another piece of this solution so chief baker and chief Davis if we can work together to identify some of these pieces and obviously we have the parks and preserves land management piece as well. So thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Okay. Paige? >> Ellis: I just wanted to make sure I daylighted while we were all here today that a lot of these preserve spaces are also endangered species habitat and we could

[11:29:00 AM]

potentially put ourselves up against some issues if we're not doing what we can to make sure that these species are protected. Long-term they're the best indicators of environmental health so even though some species might not be able to overcome that it could have detrimental impacts to us understanding as a community if we're really creating the healthiest environment that we can. Toic co-pio's remark -- to echo Pio's remark about an evacuation plan, everybody would have to be evacuating through the Y at oak hill or down mopac and there could be some potentially devastating impacts there. And I just had one last question. How does your -- do you do annual inspections when -- you're trying to make sure they can get to businesses and communities. I think you guys do a ton of analysis on this. But do you look at underbrush while you're going through that process? Or is it something that's handled separately? From a normal run that you

[11:30:01 AM]

would do for that? >> When you say annual inspections, of the vehicles. >> Ellis: No. I don't know if it's on a routine basis every year, every few years to make sure that fire lanes are painted, access hasn't

been impeded from the site plan stage to a few years down the road if any neighborhoods change what they're trying to do or private structures kind of change their entryways. I was under the impression this was a normal process but I'm not sure how often. >> All right. So we do have inspectors that do a multitude of things. All new construction has to be inspected before it can be occupied. There are some existing structures that we do inspect on an annual basis, multi-family dwellings is one of those. Fire lanes and stuff like that as they're observed, the information is passed on to us and we go through so it's more reactive to that. As far as if there's an issue or not there that we

[11:31:02 AM]

go fix it after the fact. As far as the brush stuff goes, currently our operations units, part of their inspection you can look at adjusting that, does not include a brush element to it. When they go to multi-family dwellings. So we can see about trying to add that as a component to what they look at. >> Okay. I would be really interested if you want to communicate with me on that. I think it could just be helpful if we've kind of got an all eyes and ears approach to some things that could be as damaging as a wildfire risk. >> Councilmember, I know that councilmember kitchen alluded earlier to what we do as far as wildfire education outreach. I don't have everyone's pocket. I just have councilmember alter's. If you look at -- I don't know what page it is, but it has a list of some of the activities that we've had done in the particular district that could looked

[11:32:05 AM]

at as far as that district. >> Ellis: That could be great. I could put out on my newsletter what is going on in each neighborhood so people who are most active in their proximate neighborhood could help amplify your voices and for people who may not be watching council meetings and might not be paying attention but still need to be aware of the situations. >> All help is always needed. >> Ellis: Thanks. >> Mayor Adler: Anything else? On this? Alison, if you could get me a copy of the packets that you handed out, I'd like to see it too. I know it's across districts. >> >> Alter: We posted it on the message board. We printed it out so everyone could have their individual ones. We didn't give you the 10 pack, but I think I can get it from there if you don't mind. >> Mayor Adler: That will work, thanks. All right. Thank you very much. >> Thank you all. >> Council, I believe there may have been some questions

[11:33:05 AM]

related to the police staffing plan, otherwise I can move on to the final presentation, which would just be the amendments as of now we know -- as of now we know we'll be bringing back to council. >> Mayor Adler: Delia, did you say you had some questions? >> Garza: I did. Do you want me to ask you? >>

No. I think staff will be coming in soon. I think we're good now. >> Garza: Hi, chief. I'm trying to understand the response to budget question. I'm trying to understand the overtime budget.

[11:34:08 AM]

It's budget question number 62. It was on our desk. >> It was there last night. >> Garza: On the second page it says the total vacancy savings of 11.8 million for both sworn and civilian positions posted related to fy18-19. And so that's because -- so whatever vacancies were in 18-19 that weren't filled, this is what money was left over, is that right? >> So it's a credit that's built into our budget each year. In the proposed budget that's before you right now there's a projection of roughly 17 million included in that as a credit for this upcoming year in anticipation of the savings that we should expect based on the vacancies that we know of right now.

[11:35:12 AM]

>> Garza: There are all these different overtime numbers and reimbursed versus non-reimbursed. I'm trying to understand how it all fits together. Let me go to the next page where it says non-reimbursed, call time and sworn reimbursed. Those are -- it's my understanding that reimbursed means that if some private entity uses APD staff they reimburse the department for the use of our officers, is that right, for reimbursed? >> Correct. And maybe an easy way to understand that is we get several grants for traffic safety through the traffic safety program. And so the officers are getting paid overtime through the city and then we know we're going to get reimbursed through the grant. So that's that credit that builds in for that anticipated, again, reimbursed overtime through programs such as the traffic enforcement. >> So unreimbursed is it was over time that was actually used in 1819? >> So the non-reimbursed is what we are budgeted for each year.

[11:36:13 AM]

So that's put into our budget in anticipation of the expected overtime, whether it be knowing that officers get held over late on calls or officers go to court to testify or special initiatives to address a crime issue that's occurring in a community at any particular time. So we know in any given year we're going to incur overtime costs, also for backfilling vacant positions. So every year we're budgeted for overtime and that's what you're seeing reflect understand that number. So 13.5 for 18-19 is what was budgeted for overtime. Do we know what was used for overtime? >> I don't know that here with me right now, mayor pro tem, but that's a number we can obviously produce. Our overtime expenditures traditionally exceed our budgeted overtime and the history of our overtime if you were to go back to 2008, the amount of overtime we had in 2008 compared to the

[11:37:14 AM]

amount of overtime we have today, there's very little difference, but we know in that intervening period with the increase in salaries and the like that the dollars don't go as far. So that's when we look at the vacancy savings numbers and if we have additional victim vacancy savings then sometimes those are used to offset the increase in overtime that we may have incurred that year for the vacancy positions or other draws on our over time. >> So 13.5 was allocated, but we don't know what was used, right? >> I don't have that number with me today. We're working obviously towards our cye for the year and we will have the numbers as far as what the actual expenditures were, but I don't have that number right now. >> Garza: This is kind of confusing for us who don't understand how this overtime works. So the page it says there were total vacancy savings of 11.8 related to '18-'19

[11:38:20 AM]

vacant positions and that is credited in the budget and any additional vacancy savings that the occurs is used to sworn overtime to backfill for vacant positions. I'm trying to understand how the 11.8 on the second page is 11.8 on the second page part of the 13.5 here? Or is that in addition? >> What I'm understanding is 9.5 is what is budgeted, but 13.5 is what we've spent year to date. I'm letting live updates. 13.5 is what we've spent year to date. 9.5 is what's budgeted? >> Garza: Okay. So where does the 11.8 come into either of those numbers? >> The 11.8 is separate and apart from those. The 11.8 is the vacancy savings. It's what we're expecting in this budget year to have in vacancy savings. And so when -- I know there's language in there that says anything on over and above that.

[11:39:21 AM]

So if we have vacancy savings over and above the target because we had more positions that were vacant that year that was anticipated when that number was set, then the likelihood is we probably incurred additional overtime costs to backfill those positions that we didn't anticipate being vacant so when we include the language that says anything over and above is used to offset overtime it's because when we have more in the vacancy savings categories it's because we had positions that were vacant for longer than anticipated and we likely used more overtime dollars to fill them. >> Garza: So I understand that if there's vacancies you need that money to cover the overtime to be created by those vacancies. I'm trying to understand where that overtime fits. Fits into this bigger number of 13.5. >> Correct. 13.5 -- >> Garza: Is the 11.8 in this 13.5?

[11:40:26 AM]

>> There are two separate categories. >> Garza: So are you saying of the 13.5, none of that overtime was used to fill vacancies because we weren't staffed up. No, I'm not saying that either. So I guess maybe the best way is if we were to have received that \$11.9 million in our budget, then that would have been \$11.9 million that could have gone towards that 13.5-million-dollar overtime expenditure. But since we didn't receive that because the goal is we wouldn't have vacancies, that is why we have the overtime that we've incurred. >> Garza: So with the addition of if we add the 30 officers -- I guess one would assume that overtime budget would go down because

[11:41:27 AM]

you've now filled positions that were being filled by overtime. As more officers come online we expect the overtime need to decrease for the vacancy backfill positions. What we know this year and what you're seeing is were the expected target last year was the 11.000000 and this year we're up in the 17-million-dollar range that credit is much larger larger this year because again we've got that vacancy rate that we're working on with that staffing plan that we've provided to you to work ourselves back towards a full staffing at the authorized level by 2021. >> Garza: Okay. So I guess -- I still don't understand this overtime thing and the numbers. My overall concern is similar to the one that I voiced with a fire and similar to what councilmember alter was talking about as well. I feel like we've created this overtime bucket that we

[11:42:30 AM]

still don't understand how that equation is -- not that we need to understand it, but then that bucket if it's not needed for overtime -- I'm sure it's no convince that it says also this money could be used for comprehensive evaluation of how reported sexual assaults are investigated. Which I guess in my mind when that resolution was approved I would hope that would have been a whole separate line item that council had said this is important to us. We need to make sure that we allocate funds to understand this process and then the response kind of tells us, you know, any extra money is used for important things like that. So I'm still trying to find

[11:43:32 AM]

ways how we fund so many -- without having to touch the 30 new positions, but maybe we do need to touch the 30 new positions to fund some of the other things that we've discussed, and this is more for my colleagues, which includes the mental health I believe is 1.8 million is an additional money we need to find, and other, you know, priorities that we've set. So those are all my specific questions. >> And

mayor pro tem, one point there, the comment that you're not understanding Ora Houston the overtime dollars actually being used for overtime. The 9.5 we're budgeted all of that went for overtime and we had a need for an additional four million and what we're saying is we covered that additional need internally because we saved more than the 11.8, whatever that million was in our credit, we actually had greater savings than that so we used those savings to

[11:44:35 AM]

cover the increased overtime that we had above what we were budgeted for. That allows us to save more in the vacancies category, but it drives the need for additional overtime because we still need to fill those positions out on patrol and the work needs to be done. >> Kitchen: I think what would be helpful for me is I saw a funds flow chart. I'm looking at Ed now. Because I think I understand what you're saying which is in -- I'm just going to ask one question and then I can take this offline. I would like to see a funds flow chart. That would help me. And I think what I hear you saying is that the vacant position positions are funded as well as filled positions. So if you have an unexpected vacancy, someone retires or

[11:45:35 AM]

whatever, we have funding allocated for all the positions that we authorize for the about the. So I'm -- if I'm understanding correctly that's the case. All of that funding may not be used for various reasons but some of it ends up being used for overtime because you need those positions. What I'm wanting to understand is if there is some dollar amount that is not used, so in other words, we put in our budget X dollars because there are X number of officers. Whether they're filled yet or not, we've authorized those positions so you've got X number of dollars for that. So -- so of any of those dollars that are not used are still in our budget. Whether APD spends them or not, they're still in our budget. They're allocated if I'm understanding correctly. We've still got that money and if we weren't spending

[11:46:36 AM]

the money on authorized ftes for the police we would spend them on something else. But our understanding is that the actual amount that you don't need you have to subtract out the overtime because you're spending some of it whether it's a full position or not. So what I'm trying to understand is if and to the extent the dollars that we put in our budget that go towards APD ftes plus any overtime that's needed, what's the difference? What's left over? And how does that track over the years? Is there any left over? I mean, are we balancing it tight enough. It's sort of like reserves from my perspective. We're making sure we have enough because you're doing everything you can to fill those spots. So I want to know what's left over every year. Am I asking the right -- >> It is. It is a complicated equation

[11:47:39 AM]

equation. So -- it's difficult to explain. The budget we put forth for staffing, basically wages, how many of those positions are filled, if there's more positions that are wage paid more on overtime. We're putting the budget together, we're guessing. We might be guessing that there's 100 police officers. If there ends up being 150 we'll have more savings on wages, but we'll spend more on overtime as the chief had mentioned. But then there's also the bottom line dynamics. So there is that interplay just in personnel expenditures, more vacancies, you will have more savings, but spend more on overtime and more on temporary wages. And just a quick segue. It's not just a police department issue. It happens in the fire department, it happens in the parks department. The parks department if they're running a 10% vacancies and that's high irrelevant than what they're expecting they still need to run rec centers so they may bring in more temps or they'll run overtime shifts. It's the same. Typically in the police department out of a 400 plus-million-dollar budget,

[11:48:39 AM]

they will end up with a savings. They're essentially spending 99 to 99.5% of their budget which from my perspective is pretty tight. The financial staff and the police department are watching their final payroll because that final payroll on how it hits, you know, they're calculating out are we going to have enough money at the end of the year to actually clear that final payroll. So that's true of all of our general fund operating departments. They're operating and managing their budgets on a very tight bottom line margin and there is a lot of interplay about we had some saving here so we will spend here. Sometimes it may be for a special study or some other things, but typically savings and wages is being used to pay for additional overtime or additional temperatures. I will say one year we had a need that one of the refrigerations for the

[11:49:39 AM]

vaccines went out so we needed that to buy an additional refrigeration unit. Those things happen in a department over the course of the year and they manage their budget. Budget is just a plan. Over the course of a year a plan changes and we move money around and make it all work. >> And that makes sense. The reason we're asking is it's not as tight this year, but we're going to go going into some tight years. If I'm hearing you right, it's roughly speaking three until or so every year that might be the delta between what is needed and spent between the combination of ftes and overtime and what we've set aside in our budget, roughly speaking is three or four million every year and that's available -- I assume that's available for either like you say for unfunded things that need to be done or the unexpected things like the example you

[11:50:39 AM]

just gave. And does it roll over? What if it's not -- >> It doesn't roll over. Approximate becomes part of the budget stabilization reserve fund that we have every year. So if the police department ends with three or four million dollars savings, that comes back to the general fund reserves where staff will make a recommendation. And we have. We've made a recommendation of things that we would fund out of our budget stabilization reserve fund and then when council approves that, those things get done. Typically they're kind of one time equipment type purchases. >> But when it comes back to budget stable -- >> Kitchen: When it comes back to budget stabilization, is it allocated back to department? >> No. >> Kitchen: So it come backs to the budget stabilization pot. >> The staff looks at the needs from the different departments. I can't remember the exact page reference, but it's in the budget document the items that we're proposing. Of course, this year a lot of the items we're proposing

[11:51:40 AM]

to fund out of our stabilization reserves are the one time expenditures on homelessness services that we've talked about but I can get you where that page is. It doesn't stay with the department. If the department saves money at the end of the year on the bottom line that comes back to the general fund and it's reallocated and ultimately authorized by council through the budget process. >> Kitchen: Okay. So if we authorized 30 -- I support this. Authorizing the 30 officers this year and those dollars go into the overall fte dollars, and at the end of the day those 30 officers don't start until next year. Those dollars are in that pot and to the extent that they're not needed for overtime or the other kinds of things we talked about that money will go back into the budget stabilization fund at the end of the year. And then we'll consider what to do with it at that point. Is that what you're saying? >> If they are not needed,

[11:52:41 AM]

that is what -- >> Kitchen: That's what I said, if they're not needed. If we don't fill the positions, then they wouldn't be needed except for the need for overtime. So right? >> With the additional funding and the police department's budget if they're not -- because of the timing of the cadet classes, et cetera, if they're not actually able to fill those specific 30 positions we put in the budget, the police chief would have the authority within his budget to say, well, we're going to get more boots on the street by bringing in more overtime shifts to get the workload done in which case the dollars are going still get spent, but on overtime as opposed to new employees. >> Kitchen: But they could be part of the three million at the end of the year or whatever the number is. >> Absolutely. >> Kitchen: Last question then and this is a more general question not just for the APD budget. I recall that in previous years, maybe years ago, we

[11:53:43 AM]

talked about having dollars available -- maybe this is what you're talking about. The dollars we're proposing to spend this year out of the budget stabilization fund that are over and above what we need to keep in the fund, I assume, what those are being proposed to spend on is in our budget right now on what page? Or if you don't know what page tell me how to find it. >> It's in the 800s. I will get it for you. >> Kitchen: That's all right. Looks like Alison has it. >> I think it's the last page of the fund summaries tab. >> Kitchen: Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Kathie? >> Tovo: Thanks. I haven't had a chance to digest it in the Q and A, but it was responsive about recruiting and how you're going to -- what the plan is for that so I appreciate it. I had one question that hopefully I now can remember. In the Q and A response --

[11:54:46 AM]

sorry to tread this ground again, but the vacancy savings where we're talking about the vacancy savings of 11,884,000, et cetera, as I understand these couples of paragraphs, the vacant positions in 2018-2019 are funded however the line is the vacant positions are funded, however some were only potentially funded but budget adoption. So I assume they were funded in part through the budget decision and then in part through the vacancy savings. >> I think that's referring to fact that we get midyear funding. The positions in the budget that are proposed, the 30 for this year are actually proposed for six-month funding, not full year funding. So I believe that's what we're referring to there is they weren't fully funded for the entire year. >> Tovo: So the vacant

[11:55:46 AM]

positions last year at this time of year, the approximate positions were not -- were only partially funded. >> That's correct and that's part of the \$30 million. I think we added roughly 30 officers last year. We assumed the earliest they would be on board is April. We put in last of the cost. We budget a full amount for the officers and then the vacancy savings actually a line item in the budget that's a negative. So through that negative dollar amount we back out six months of funding because our assumption is if police was fully staffed up, come October first of the fiscal year it would take them six months to graduate the cadet class and get the new officers actually into the seats. So for many years we've been budgeting the new officers for six months of funding in the first year, which of course does have a downstream impact on the budget when we analyze those costs. >> Tovo: So I guess I'm

[11:56:47 AM]

trying to make -- that's really what you're describing in that paragraph. All of the vacant positions are funded, however, some are only partially funded. The budget includes a credit offset for vacancy savings. That's what you're describing. You fund them for the year, but the six months their salary goes into the vacancy savings and is primarily used on overtime. >> Right. >> Tovo: And my other question is the need for overtime. Do you have any sense or are there any responses amidst the information that we've gotten that would help me understand how much of that is due to vacancies and how much of that overtime is due to efforts like the one that you're initiating right now, which I assume has related in overtime to kind of increase the forces in the downtown area in response to the rash of shootings. >> So you do not have that information in this response. I don't believe that level of detail was requested.

[11:57:49 AM]

We do capture that detail within our overtime budget. We have task orders and other line items. So we will have a breakout of court Cowell back time of -- call back time of late calls for service. So we have categories of overtime and one of those would be backfill. So we do have the ability to run reports on the subcategories of that larger number. >> Great. Thank you. Because I am assuming that that's -- that amounts to some substantial overtime as well when you have those kinds of special initiatives where you have officers coming back and doing overtime to participate in those efforts. >> Yes. In an initiative like we have right now the downtown command is extensive, but they are necessary based on things that come up throughout the community. >> Tovo: Thank you. Would that be terribly time consuming to produce that kind of information for at least the last several months. >> And that information being the break down of all the subcategories or the initiative we're doing

[11:58:49 AM]

downtown or all of that? >> Tovo: Let me think about it a little bit more. >> And we will work obviously to provide you the responses that you do. Many of them would just be going in and looking at a line item. Some of them it might be collating information sources from some different areas. >> Tovo: I probably don't need that to make a decision about the budget. So I probably won't submit it at this point, but I think it would be useful information to have it. Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Alison. >> Alter: Thank you. I haven't had a chance to really dive into this, but I did want to clarify a couple of things. On the second page it says total vacancy savings, 11.8 million for both sworn and civilian positions. This is in this year's budget. What is that for fiscal year 20? >> The projection is roughly 17 million. It might not be exact. I don't know if you can pull it up, but I know it's close to 17 million for this year. >>

[11:59:50 AM]

>> Alter: If you could get that for us and also explain how it's calculated, the number. >> Essentially what we're doing when we try to calculate that, and this is all estimates or perhaps even guess Ta mates because things change a lot. But I do have a report in front of me right now that year to date the police department's total vacancy savings is nearly \$16 million. So essentially they have had vacancies over and above what we expected in the budget and they're using those dollars to fund additional overtime shifts, temporaries, or as part of that bottom line savings that councilmember kitchen was talking about. So when we look to fiscal year '20, given that they're currently tracking at about \$17 million, we're trying to accurately reflect that in budget. So that really wasn't a bottom line reduction in the department's budget because we said hey, you're currently tracking at about \$17 million given your currently vacancy rates and current projected cadet

[12:00:51 PM]

academies and what you will experience next year. Let's take those dollars away from wages and let's rebudget them where it's expected that you will spend them, which I expect was largely in overtime and perhaps on other personnel line items. So you will have a of this with vacancy savings the way we're budgeting it is just trying to true the budget for fiscal year 2020 up with how the expenditures are actually tracking in fy16. And that always is moving around. If their vacancies come down a lot in fiscal year '20 and fiscal year 10-1 we'll have a lower -- physical 21, we'll have a lower overtime amount. >> Alter: So the corresponding number is anticipated to be about 17 million and that would largely be acted to for by however how much money was put in there for the 30 new officers. >> Some of that 17 million is the six months of savings from those new 30 officers. >> Okay. And some of it is just reflecting the realities of what happens -- >> That the current vacancies are trending

[12:01:52 PM]

higher than where we've seen them. >> And how much money -- if I just looked at the 30 officers, divided between the 10 leadership positions and the 20 officer positions positions, Hugh was that credited towards the part where it was credited in the budget. So we have a vacancy that's taken away, but is credited for that, but then how did you budget those 30 positions because they weren't given full funding for all 30. You had start-up costs. How do we think about that. Was that six months they were started? >> It was six months for all 30 whether they were command staff or frontline officers. >> Alter: But those detectives might go in earlier. The marginal difference might go in earlier for the detectives or something? >> Our proposal is that we will take those detectives at least we're going to take three of them, the proposal would be immediately so that we can address the immediate needs in both sex crimes and robbery division, however we

[12:02:52 PM]

will just -- we know that we're going to incur the cost of those promotions over the six months without getting the funding for them and that will just roll in again through the budget through the year and would be addressed at the end of the year in however much money we would have to give back. >> Alter: Thank you, if you could give us a chart with the savings and what it's estimated to be in fiscal year 20 and give us a sense for this was budgeted in each of those years and for fiscal year '19 where it's coming in at. And if there's any explanation on what that marginal difference in that overtime, what accounts for that, if it was backfill or not, that would be helpful. What I'm trying to understand is how much slack is there in that additional vacancy savings and was that mostly covered in how you

[12:03:53 PM]

budget budgeted that in there. I wanted to also just have a broader discussion of vacancies because I've had conversations with Ed and we've talked about how we've a large organization and some vacancy rate just given the numbers that we're talking about even in the police department is normal sort of process and that's why we have the vacancy credit. It is my understanding that five% is actually not huge relative to what we see is vacancies for the rest of the city. >> The rest report I saw is that the police sworn vacancies are currently at 5.3% for context overall across all of our general fund civilian positions the vacancy rate is currently nine percent. So five percent, just the treadmill of people retiring and it takes people time to fill those positions. A lot of times positions are filled internally. If a manager retires that's a vacancy, maybe takes three

[12:04:53 PM]

months to fill it with a supervisor, an internal one. That just moves the vacancy to another position and then there's a lead position that fills the supervisor. It may be a year before you actually get that bottom line position coming back into the system. And of course over that year other people have left the organization. There is that churn of vacancies and how long the positions are unfilled and how long that takes. At least with my experience with this city it's typically seven to -- maybe as much as 10% of our vacancies at any given snapshot in time are vacant. It typically is higher when council first adopts a budget on October 1st and there's new positions in the budget it comes up to about 10 and over the course of a year we slowly make progress on that churn and start to bring the number down. It typically doesn't get much lower than seven percent. >> Alter: The vacancy credit and the overtime that needs to be used sometimes to fill vacancies is normal across the city.

[12:05:54 PM]

What's different with police or with fire is sometimes we take more advantage of filling those vacancies because you have to either staff the fire truck or you have to have -- there's demand for the police services that for safety reasons are not affordable. So we may be spending more on overtime on average than in other departments. >> Certainly they spend more on overtime because they're much larger departments. But I think the dynamic is the same in the library, the parks and recreation department. If they have a high turnover rate for some reason in our parks maintenance will the lawn still need to get mowed, does maintenance work still need to get done? They will bring in crews on an overtime shift. Will they be able to contract the work or fill in with temps. The work still needs to get done whether the vacancy rate is two percent or 10%. But they will have to shift money around to get the work done. It's not unique to police or fire. It's really universal. >> Alter: But yet we say

[12:06:55 PM]

we'll be able to police get down to one percent vacancy rate? >> And if they're successful in doing that I would anticipate -- >> Alter: And that will bring down the overtime. >> If they actually get down to one percent vacancy rate they will end up going higher on their wages than what we put into the budget, but they'll have savings in other line items because they at the end of the day they're responsible to the bottom line of their budget and that's what would happen there. >> Alter: And my last question is for the chief and it goes back to the point that mayor pro tem made respect to the sex crimes unit. We have voted unanimously, and we are waiting for the study, but there's a lot of things that could be done now. Can you tell me what is in this budget that is beefing up the sex crimes unit and what other plans you have for reallocating resources to the sex crimes unit so that we can demonstrate that

[12:07:55 PM]

this commitment is also there in APD? >> Certainly. I think we would go back to the addition of the four additional positions that we did internally this past year to address not only the shortages we saw in the unit, but the anticipated growth in the work due to getting all the kits back that were part of the backlog. So we increased by four investigators and transferred an additional supervisor into the unit from within the department as well to increase the ratio of supervision to the detectives. The first three promotions out of this budget if it is approved for positions, including detectives, two of those will go to sex crimes again to increase your capacity to handle the workload that they face. And then some of the other issues that we've talked about before, we're working on the interview rooms, we're working on making sure they reflect the best practices and that they're centered on the survivors' needs and what we are

[12:08:56 PM]

awaiting then will be the results of the review that's done to identify are there things we should be doing differently or better. We're investing also in the crisis counselors, which is an important resource for someone who has been through this level of victimization, trying to improve our response so the response will not only be the police officer, but have a victim's crisis counselor with them so the survivor doesn't have to repeatedly tell their account over and over again. All of these we realize are best practices and we're working towards, and again we're anticipating the outcome of the review that's done to identify any future staffing needs or changes in processes or procedures. >> Alter: Thank you. So the interview room changes are already in your budget plans as is? >> We're handling that internally within our budget. >> Alter: And what about the vehicle needs that the staff expressed? >> I believe we moved one vehicle over there and then as we add more detectives to the unit then that would increase the need to put

[12:09:56 PM]

more vehicles there. And that again is part of the overall budget when we receive additional vehicles with the positions that we receive, then we allocate them to where they would need to be. And if we're adding additional sex crimes investigators, in this case two, the likelihood is that we will need to add an additional vehicle there as well. >> Alter: Thank you. Appreciate it. >> Mayor Adler: Pio. >> Renteria: Thank you for this report. Also I want to find out if you can give me the report on how many people -- officers actually took the retirement when we negotiated the new union contract? I would like to find out what is in the contract with the overtime hours and there were a lot of officers that threatened if we passed

[12:10:57 PM]

that negotiation, that last contract that they were going to retire and I would like to find out how many people that you end up losing. >> I believe it was 39 in the month of December of San Antonio leading up to the no -- in '17 leading up to the contract. >> Renteria: And how many officers is there retiring? >> Our average is 5.7 speaker month and that is based on the past couple of years history since we have since 2017. So to have a month with 39 was a significant impact. >> Renteria: Is that why we saw an increase in the overtime because we had these officers because of new contract or what caused the-- where we didn't have enough officers to -- the the backlog that happened? >> So in December of 2017 we were actually getting very near being staffed to our authorized strength. So we were very close to hitting the mark.

[12:11:58 PM]

But when the agreement did not pass and we saw 39 officers, again, I believe it's 39 officers leave, we fell far behind and we began that cycle of catching up. We're also seeing an attrition rate of 5.7, which is higher than what we had seen in years previous and part of that is officers choosing to leave earlier in their career. Part of that also is that as a growing city 25 years ago we started hiring more officers, the cadet classes were larger and now that those classes are becoming eligible for retirement just by nature of the fact they were larger classes to begin with, the attrition rate is higher as well. So it was a combination of the large exodus in December of '17 plus the higher monthly attrition that we see that has us higher with vacancies. >> If I could add, I think it's a good example of the dynamic nature of these personnel budgets when you have an unanticipated attrition rate like those.

[12:12:59 PM]

When those folks attrit, there's a terminal pay, it's basically the payout to people who are leaving the system for earned sick leave and vacation leave. That can be expensive. The way we pay for that when we have unexpected savings on the wages because there was more retirements than we expected, we take the savings and use it to pay out the higher than anticipated terminal pay. It's never an exact science. Things move around from what we plan for in the budget versus how they actually play out. I think it's another good dynamic that's similar to the whole interplay between vacancy savings and overtime and wages. >> Mayor Adler: ann? >> Kitchen: I think you answered my question. I just want to say thank you for the efforts related to the sexual assault unit, in particular the interview rooms. We did receive the information that very shortly, I believe, that all -- five or six interview rooms will be repainted and

[12:14:00 PM]

redecorated and all those kinds of things. That's really important. You know, the -- how people feel or how victims feel when they're in that circumstance is really important, and I know you know that so I just want to thank you all for doing what -- doing -- you know, taking the steps that were needed in order to get that fixed. >> Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Anything else on this? Chief, thank you. >> Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Ed? >> Yep. So we just have one more presentation. I think this one will be really quick, but as you know every year as part of budget adoption there's things that happen from the time we propose the budget to you on August 5 to the time it's adopted on September 10. This is just a short summary of things that we know to date that we intend to bring forward on the tenth so I just thought I'd take a moment to show them now so they're not a surprise to you come September 10.

[12:15:02 PM]

I am on slide 17 of your presentation. So first, this first one is just an omission from the proposed budget. We proposed an additional \$575,000 in the parks program to fund programming for individuals with learning disabilities but didn't put the two positions into their budget that they need to actually implement those programs so that's what this item would do. You see there's no dollars with it, just increase the personnel count in parks by two positions for those programs. The next line item has to do with carrying forward unexpended funds from fiscal year 2019 to 2020. I'm sure you've all been in contact with Lauren in the financial services department, still working on what that final number will be, but we'll have that for you September 10 and carry forward your unexpended budgets. The budget stabilization reserve fund for muni court, had the muni court actually opened on schedule we would have already had this contract underway for the

[12:16:04 PM]

furnishings for the new court building, given the delay this was money already in the fiscal '19 budget, need to carry forward into fiscal '20 because they have not been able to enter into the contract for the furniture on the building yet. The next slide has to do to increase local occupancy tax increase by two pennies, as you know to bring in just short of \$21 million of revenue. These actions allocated to the different buckets, \$14.7 million will end up going towards the convention center's capital fund, and then \$3.1 million each to the cultural arts and historic preservation fund so those numbers all add up to the \$21 million. This next one is another omission from the budget. There were two capital projects at the Austin transportation department didn't get in. One had to do with the traffic impact fees and one has to do with the I-35

[12:17:08 PM]

parking fund, total of \$1.85 million that they'll be transferring to their capital improvement program to do capital work in those two areas. The Austin code, this number is still under works but we've had conversations here in work sessions and with many of you individually about the ability to use the clean community fee to do the cleanup of homeless encampments in parks. We have talked with our staff in the code compliance department and the legal department. We are all cleared to do that. The parks department is working on finalize their estimate of what it's gonna take in order to do that work so this \$500,000 I think is on the high end and we will come back on the tenth with an amendment to essentially take clean community fees and to enhance the cleanup of encampments in our park. There's no general fund impact associated with that. Last one, as you know, when we receive certification, the result of certification was nearly an additional

[12:18:08 PM]

\$2.5 million at the rollback rate. We continue to have dialogue with all of you, received great feedback during the three budget work sessions. On the tenth staff will be bringing forward a recommendation on what we think a good path forward on those additional revenues would be. And then finally I would just mention that we are -- we're seeking any amendments that you may have, that you may be bringing forth on the tenth later today. We're gonna be putting out a standardized form that we would suggest that everybody uses just so it's easier to keep track of everybody's amendments. You might want to be making to the budget. Staff from the budget office are at your disposal to help you flushing out your ideas for amendments to the budget. Costing of items. In the email I'll send out this afternoon we have a dedicated person that you can reach out to and that person will make sure you're getting the information you need to craft any amendments you might want to make to the staff's proposed budget. Then finally we'd be

[12:19:09 PM]

recommending that when you have your amendments prepared that you post them to the message board so that everybody has a chance to see them in advance of the tenth. Our plan in the budget office would be to pull down all the amendments that have been posted prior to the tenth and we'll compile a packet for you so everybody is working off the same packet. You won't have to bring the stuff as long as you've posted it on the message board we'll pull it down and make copies for everybody. That's our plan for the tenth. Those are the amendments that we'll be bringing forward. I don't know if there's any questions about that process or suggestions for how we might be able to make it more smooth, I'd be happy to hear them. >> Mayor Adler: I know, manage, you've gone around and talked to the offices and probably gotten a feel for where people are generally, getting direction, and you laid that out on the -- if you laid that out on the 2.5 million I think that would be helpful as a starting place. Ann. >> Kitchen: I had a question that I was thinking would be in the staff proposed budget amendments or maybe it's in here and it's not listed

[12:20:11 PM]

here. But we had been talking about for the south Austin housing center that we needed to make sure that the funds are designated for the housing assistance that goes along with the operations. So is that included? >> So we had 1.5 million -- we think it's included. We had \$1.5 million in our budget. I think we characterized it as housing alternatives for people experiencing homelessness. At one point in time it was envisioned this would be money that would help us looking at approved camping locations. We're not going to go that path any longer. >> Kitchen: Okay. >> We're looking toward those funds -- that would be the source of funds that would be available for rental assistance for people into the new shelter, you know, there's some guesswork in regards how much that will need to be and how much people are there, what the turnover is.

[12:21:11 PM]

We have not run this shelter before. >> Kitchen: Sure. >> We don't know exactly when it's gonna be stood up and available. >> Kitchen: Yeah. >> But we believe \$1.5 million will address that need this year and then we'll have to make adjustments during the year if it turns out to be too high or too low and then once the center is up and running we can get it really dialed in for fiscal year '21 but we have 1.5 million available for that. >> Kitchen: That's sufficient. Probably more than is gonna be needed. I want to make sure that that's written somewhere. So -- and I don't know what the appropriate place to put that is in the budget documents. I want to make sure that it's designated for that because we committed in the resolution that we passed that we would not stand up the housing center without having the funds dedicated for operations and operations includes those housing assistance. So I wasn't thinking to bring -- I didn't think I needed to bring budget

[12:22:11 PM]

direction but I want to -- I want -- I would like to see where it says what you just told me. So if you could just -- we could take that off-line. >> The language in the budget I can tell is you more general. It doesn't specifically call out the south housing center. But I can tell you that your direction is understood and that's what we're planning to do, but -- >> Kitchen: Can you write that into your budget amendments just as you've done with these other budget amendments? >> My recommendation is that we'll work with you to bring that forward and so that can be part of the adoption process. >> Kitchen: I don't want to bring that as my budget amendment because it was directed to staff to include that in the budget this time. So I think it's part of the -- should be part of the staff proposed budget amendments. So whatever is the right way to write that. Does that make sense? I mean, it was included in the resolution that we passed in June. >> I'll see you off-line. >> Kitchen: Thank you. >> Mayor Adler: Natasha. >> Harper-madison: Yeah, I just wanted to --

[12:23:12 PM]

[indiscernible] Is not here today but I wanted to take the opportunity to acknowledge how proud I am of councilmember pool's efforts and leadership around the out of school time child care, but I do want to make certain that this is a project we're gonna be able to fund. I'm super excited about the opportunity here to provide some out of school time child care for the youth, especially in district 1. Also, Garcia I believe is another one, turner Roberts and the George Washington ton carver are gonna get much needed assistance with programmatic efforts and out of school time child care. I just want to know how we're gonna be able to fund this effort. >> So that proposal, as far as I understood from talking to councilmember pool, is about \$500,000, roughly split about half for onetime and half of the ongoing. It's one of numerous items.

[12:24:13 PM]

We've heard from various council offices. I can tell you the ideas for things that you'd still like to address in this budget is greater than the \$2.5 million, so we're trying to get input from everybody and weigh all the different factors, looking for how things align with and support the strategic direction that you had passed in your strategic plan. So that's why, you know -- that's what we're here to do today, seek that feedback from you. So we have that. I know councilmember pool also supports that one, but that's the task before us over the next few days, weigh all this information and craft a recommendation to you for the tenth. >> Mayor Adler: Okay. >> Casar: So I just very briefly want to -- since we may not see each other really soon as we go back and look, I just want to put my thoughts on the table that, one, you know, I'd be really interested in funding mental health response issues largely as

[12:25:13 PM]

[indiscernible] Potentially with refinements as the dais sees fit and especially I was looking at the numbers to try to understand how many months in each of these things comes to online because there might be savings there if we think about when something will really get started. I've been supportive of the -- what I think are relatively small dollar figures on reproductive health access, abortion access, keeping the relationship violence program running, which was a onetime fund pilot kickoff, it seems they've used that money actually even more effectively and a. Than I anticipated they would to help a lot of people, so to keep that going. I heard a lot of our civilian staff come with a lot of concern about taking a zero next year on their cola. I think it's important for us to know and I've already confirmed this with Ed that what we're considering in our projections for next year's budget is not a zero.

[12:26:14 PM]

It's a -- again, at 2.5 and so we think us reiterating that during this budget hopefully can address a lot of what we heard people come up with. I would be supportive of going above the -- above 2.5 the best that we can as we look at putting all of these programs together. And to doing what it is we can to respect, you know, all of our staff that are working so hard. But I do want to try to get the message out the best that we can as we pass this budget that we are looking at -- not at giving people a zero next year because I think that's part of what people's concern was, and I think it's important that people organized to come express that to us. I'd be interested in trying to see what we could do above 2.5 but I think we can address some of the concerns with how we talk about next year. On the police staffing memo that we got here, again, I think the estimate continues to be a 19% attrition rate, which seems to be what the

[12:27:14 PM]

attrition rate -- the rate of cadet hiring has been over the course of the last nine years of lasts -- classes but if you look at the last four or five it seems the attrition rate out of the academy is way higher than 19%. So I'd ask this last time but I would love to see what we think the graduation and how much we will need these positions if we improve graduation rates but not improve them so much that we are kind of at the best end of our averaging but if they improve somewhat. And I think to mayor pro tem Garza's point if the some of this money is actually going to get used for overtime I wonder how transparent we are to say what are overtime dollars and what we actually anticipate that we fill. Councilmember kitchen, my homelessness funding direction that I would like to work on I don't think is -- is not in any way specifically in response to

[12:28:16 PM]

what you said. I think it's important to lay out sort of what our plan is on funding but also I'd be really interested in having some -- closing some on our direction related to all of the homelessness funding that we are -- that all of us is subject to -- all of this is subject to review. I mean, we're hiring a chief officer in this area. Some folks may disagree but I would really like to provide as much flexibility as possible if we decide this investment isn't as strategic as that investment, that we're going to open this or that facility at a different date because we're now moving over here. That's not to undo any previous decisions but I would really like to provide significant flexibility that would still have to be authorized by council, that would still have to come back to us if we're gonna change any course or time line, but I would really like to make sure that the dollar -- this increase in dollars that we're dedicating is as strategically programmed as possible, and I know that that means that everybody that has any re-mark right now, that that is the most

[12:29:16 PM]

comfortable place to be in but in the end we're all gonna do better if we all take a step back and really figure out what this -- with this new funding how we're all gonna do better. So this isn't to say that we didn't want to fund a thing. It really is to say with this new chief officer coming in I really want to hear her as they coordinates amongst these folks what the highest impact would be. So I'd like to add that sentence at the bottom of whatever we do and I appreciate my colleagues' words on the out of school child care issuing as we try to figure out what to fit in 2 million plus any other reductions or changes that we make, you know, I understood we're trying to figure something out that is good for the entire dais but I just wanted to highlight those big issues for me. >> Mayor Adler: Kathie. >> Garza: Sounds like everybody is kind of wrapping up their comments, and I had asked for staff to

[12:30:16 PM]

be here for something specific. So are we gonna wrap up and come back to specifics or? >> Mayor Adler: Which staff? >> Garza: It was I believe public health and real estate. >> Tovo: Are we gonna take lunch then first? >> Mayor Adler: I'm trying to gauge how much more we have. Do we want to come back? Do people -- we obviously have. >> Garza: I can come back. I was prepared to be here all day. >> Mayor Adler: Everybody ready to come back after lunch? >> Kitchen: Yes. >> Mayor Adler: Do we want to take our break and go to lunch? 12:30. >> Casar: Sorry didn't mean to sound like closing? >> Mayor Adler: Sounded like a closing. >> Garza: Sounded like that's where it was heading. >> Mayor Adler: Everybody want to come back at 1:15. >> Renteria: I want to continue the same conversation we're having right now. >> Mayor Adler: We're gonna continue. If we could get staff here too. Does anybody else need other staff to come?

[12:31:17 PM]

>> Alter: I'm not sure if I need staff. I requested multiple times what the [indiscernible] Housing money was going to be spent on and I don't have that information yet. >> Mayor Adler: We'll address the housing trust fund question. >> Garza: Mayor, my questions are really quick and they're here. If my colleagues would indulge three minutes. >> Mayor Adler: Go ahead. >> Garza: Thank you. This was -- this issue was brought up yesterday at the judicial committee. I really appreciate staff's work to include a child care facility in the new south muni court location, and I asked these questions then and it's my understanding that we do not have funding right now we have space and real opportunity for our city to have child care facility on one of our facilities for our employees but there's no funding for some of the retrofitting

[12:32:18 PM]

that needs to be done which would be a onetime cost and there's not funding. I was told public health would have those numbers in two weeks but I'm concerned when we're about to approve the budget next week. Just one question, is there a cost estimate to what it would cost to retrofit the space and the cost for the lease? >> Mayor and council, Alex, interim officer for the office of real estate. We have put together an estimate of what those costs would be total for the rent, operating expenses and the onetime buildout for the facility. We've estimated to be roughly \$463,000. That would be of course at the start of the fiscal year. Realistically, we don't think we would be ready to move in and allocate those

[12:33:19 PM]

costs right in October 1. Best case scenario would be January 1, and so the dollar amount associated with that move-in date would be more than likely \$403,000. >> Garza: You said 463 for the whole year but 403 for half a year? >> Correct. There's a onetime fee for the buildout that we've estimated for about \$225,000, that is an overage of what the tenant approximate amount they've allocated for us so that \$225,000 is a onetime fee. The full amount would be 403,976 that we anticipate if we move in on January 1 of what that fiscal year '20 cost would be. >> Garza: Okay. Mr. Van eenoo, can you turn that -- I guess my question into a budget question so councilmembers can -- and then they could provide that

[12:34:19 PM]

response and then I'll get to my support that have in the wrap-up comments later? Thank you for that indulgence. >> [Off mic] >> We'll get all that into a budget. We'll get that out this afternoon if we can. >> Tovo: So are we coming back? I'll save some of my comments but while we're on that subject I wasn't at the judicial committee meeting so this is a new item and I think it's very exciting and I would just put in a plug if this item moves forward, and I hope it will and we'll think about -- I guess this gets to our comments later. I think it would be great to know what some people are thinking about in terms of reductions to fund some of these important needs and I would put this at the top of the list. But there are some best practices at -- well, I don't know if it's a best practice because they're not very common but there are interesting examples of drop-in centers, child care centers at court especially so parents who are there in

[12:35:20 PM]

the process of trying to resolve issues have child care for their kids and having been at muni court a couple times and seeing lots of very bored kids and bringing my own bored kids to lots of places like that, I think a drop-in center would really be important so I hope as we're doing our planning we can think about it not just for our employees at muni court and potentially the public, too, if there's room but also making sure that we're carving out a drop-in component for people using the court system. >> Mayor Adler: Okay. Anybody else? Can anybody else identify staff that they want to make sure come back this afternoon? Any other staff requests this afternoon? Kathie. >> Tovo: I don't know that -- I think I probably just need Ed. I had asked a question in a q&a and I've forgotten now which number it was, trying to get at reductions in different departments. One of the things that

[12:36:21 PM]

usually -- in the old format it was pretty -- it was easier to see what new programs were being added and what existing programs might be reduced or eliminated. Or at least in the proposal. And so I had asked a question designed to elicit that. What I got back were opportunities for efficiency that were

being realized and that doesn't really tell me what programs we may not be continuing. So I've asked some very specific questions in the q&a to see, for example, whether the afterschool funding we currently provide aid is gonna continue. I mean, we realized that it wasn't proposed at the same level last year, through a q&a. So I asked that same question again and have asked questions about some other programs but there's no kind of easy way to figure out what -- what programs might not be continuing. >> I mean, it could be a quick answer. I don't know that it will be. Again, the past I can recall myself making a budget

[12:37:22 PM]

presentation where I would highlight these are some things that council funded last year on a onetime basis, and I remember the aid funding was something that for several years in a row was funded on a onetime basis so I would always highlight in my budget presentation just a remind this was only funded onetime, it's not in this year's budget. That kind of list we can provide you to very quickly. It's just not a - - it's not a long list this year because we did not fund a lot of things last year on a onetime basis like we had been several years in a row, for example, the aid funding is now part of our recurring operating budget and so there's no reductions to that program. I'm trying to remember off the top of my head but short of things that were planning efforts that really were onetime, I can't think of anything significant that we removed from the budget, but I think we can put that kind of list together for you very quickly. >> Tovo: I may have misphrased kind of the -- >> I think I probably misunderstood what you're

[12:38:22 PM]

looking for. >> Tovo: We tried to clarify I think in the follow-up. But that was in substance what I was looking for. I'm really glad and think it's very useful information to see department by department what kinds of efficiencies they're considering or have implemented or plan to in the future. I think that's very important and responsive to kind of the general direction we all need to be thinking. Just getting back to what you said, though, the onetime funds like with regard to aid, I think that's -- I think you're right, we had moved from a onetime system to then recurring, but last year had I not asked the question we wouldn't have known that the recurring funding was less than the amount of the need and less than the amount of the previous year. And so it is helpful and will be helpful to see a list of the onetime programs that you may have cut, but it doesn't necessarily tell me what kinds of programs in different departments may no longer be continued. So it's just a -- at this point it's just an observation. >> And I don't -- >> Tovo: That we need to work on for next year

[12:39:23 PM]

because I know that that's information that I need and maybe other councilmembers need as we look at the budget to kind of figure out -- especially if -- especially if we're funding new things, kind of what those new things are, what are the old things that are maybe not coming back, what are the programs that are being reduced. I just need a quicker way of figuring that out without kind of imagining what kind of questions I need to ask to elicit that information through the q&a. >> We do try to highlight anything that's notable. That's a subjective term. >> Tovo: Right. >> I know one thing funded last year on a onetime basis was the \$160,000 for the youth homelessness life works contract. >> Tovo: Right. >> That was onetime. But it -- >> Tovo: And you did highlight that. I remember seeing that. >> We chose to make it ongoing and we highlighted that. Had we eliminated it we would have found a way to highlight it. We're trying to highlight anything -- we don't want you to be surprised, trust me. But we can certainly talk about that more, about how we could do that. Because there's literally thousands of contracts throughout the city and in any given year some may go

[12:40:24 PM]

up a little or down a little. >> Tovo: Sure. I don't -- I take that point. >> How do you narrow it down to what people really want to see so you don't -- >> Tovo: Somewhere in the q&a I asked about council initiatives and my staff have done work looking at council initiatives to try to match up the funding. So I may have all of the information I need here or there but maybe we can talk -- it may be that you've -- there just aren't eliminations and that's great so that's why they're not highlighted so that's useful. Thanks. >> Great. >> Mayor Adler: Any other staff that we want here when we come back from lunch? Ann. >> Kitchen: I just have two things I need to give people a heads-up on. I don't need staff. >> Mayor Adler: We're coming back. Let's come back at 1:30. Does that work? >> Kitchen: Mayor, I really need an hour? Can we make it 1:40. >> Garza: I like 1:30. >> Mayor Adler: 1:30. >> Kitchen: I can't come back at 1:30 so --

[12:41:24 PM]

>> Mayor Adler: Okay. [Recess]

[1:39:39 PM]

>> Mayor Adler: All right. Thank you. It's 1:39. We have a quorum. We're all back -- not all back, but we have a quorum. Ann said that as you recall she couldn't be here at 1:30. She will be here in five minutes. Others should come down. We were at the place that we should highlight questions that other people have questions to. We should highlight that. Then if other people would share what they're thinking in terms of priorities, I think that would be helpful for everybody to get into here. Does anybody have any questions they want to direct toward Ed. >>. >> Garza: I don't have a question, but I was wondering how

we do the amendments. Can we talk about that? Actually, I'm not prepared to give my closing ideas of where all the money goes and where it's coming from at this point.

[1:40:40 PM]

It was actually something that councilmember kitchen said and I missed the first part, but it was something like we passed a resolution and why isn't it in the manager's proposed. And we've done that all the time. We pass resolutions all the time and it's not in -- in fact, I think it happened with I think some firefighter staffing funding and then it was Ed who eloquently -- in his eloquent Ed way if we funded everything you passed a resolution for we would have a 10 billion-dollar budget hole. Which is -- I think we've gotten better about not expecting everything -- every resolution and the mayor has kind of pushed us back on making decisions about the budget. So that being said, I was thinking of a way to prioritize additional funds if -- maybe this is too much work, but if there was a way

[1:41:40 PM]

to put -- you know, list all the asks and then show whether there has been a council resolution, if maybe there's been a council resolution I would -- in my mind I would think that is funding that should be -- if it's a conversation that we've been having for awhile and we've been talking about this in ways to fund certain kinds of things, but I just -- I don't know how we're going to do the different amendments without going back to the previous -- even before our time on council, the previous act, I mean the previous practice would somebody would make a motion and then you would wait until the rest of the money and gone and let's say the number is 2.5 million, once it was allocated that was it and everybody voted on the budget at that point. I'm just trying to thinking aloud on how we prioritize all the different asks. And I think some way to show

[1:42:40 PM]

that there has been previous work -- maybe I can do that myself when I make my message board post. I'm advocating for this funding because we passed this resolution and I'm thinking of the fire one in particular and how we help that part of my district to help get their interest rates lower. Just thoughts. >> I will say that -- wrong, but there was -- correct me if I'm wrong, but there was a resolution about budget resolutions that were not in this budget. Did we finish that work? >> Tovo: [Inaudible]. >> Mayor Adler: Can you turn on your microphone, Kathie. >> Tovo: Sort of a good catch. I did soak my microphone. I was just saying that I believe I submitted that through the Q and a and I'm just looking to see if I've gotten a response yet in my materials. >> Mayor Adler: Okay. I don't know the answer to the question in terms of

[1:43:41 PM]

process. We've tried different kinds of things. My hope is that I know, manager, you're going around to the different offices. My hope is that you get a feel for where people are. My hope is that you can start us off on that conversation based on what your sense is. Hopefully that gets us closer on that. I've always been resistant of just going around in a circle and having people grab money because then the order and stuff -- I think I just feel like there has to be a better way to do that. My hope is that you can daylight something to us earlier ahead of time so that people will see what that looks like, in fact, as soon as you can, once you've seen the conversations here today and seen some postings. I think that would be really helpful to kind of narrow us. >> I appreciate that. I think that was the purpose of having this conversation, especially this afternoon where some of these priorities would be daylight daylighted so looking forward to it. >> Alison? >> So I had a couple of

[1:44:43 PM]

outstanding questions I have a bunch that I'm waiting for to help identify funding. There are a couple of things I want clarity on from Ed. I asked before about the housing trust fund. Do we have any of that? >> I'm told that they are working on that still and that they anticipate it will be posted later this afternoon, the response to that budget question on the details of the housing trust fund allocation. >> Alter: Okay. And then could you clarify what the costs of an increase or staff as requested by acsme by two and a half to four percent, would be like general fund department, non-general fund? >> The total increase is estimated at \$3.9 million for that 0.5% additional. And 800,000 of that would be in the general fund. >> Alter: And how much would it be to address the concerns of the lifeguards at Barton springs? >> That is as simple as it

[1:45:43 PM]

sounds, that actually has turned out to be a complicated question. Hrd has been working on it. The last I checked in with them they said they would have that by tomorrow morning, but it's not just a matter of the lifeguards. It then causes issues with the supervisors of those lifeguards in trying to keep the pay scale and structure. So they're looking at all that and trying to come up with a recommendation that would address the request, but not tip the apple cart, so to speak, on the rest of the lifeguard classification system and costing all that out. But tomorrow we should have an answer for you. >> Alter: Okay. Thank you. So I don't have the information on the housing trust fund, but I would like to kind of float a balloon and see how people feel about it. I've heard several of my colleagues mention the desire for our new homeless strategy officer to have some flexibility and to have some funding. What I want us

to consider is pulling some of the housing trust fund money and some of the pay for success money and putting in in a pot that would be under the

[1:46:45 PM]

homeless strategy housing officer and there is flexibility so if it's not used by that officer that it's kind of back into those pots. I haven't put my head around exactly what the right amount would be, but we've put 14 million in the if we were just following our investment policy, we would have been putting closer to 7 million if I have the numbers right. So there's an additional seven million that's being put into that pot. And while -- again, I don't have the specifics on what's being used for that, but it seems like we could take a million of that, we could take a million from the pay for success and we could address some of the homeless issues, potentially when we have strategy officer in place, and then she would have some flexibility to use her knowledge and her skills to do the things that need to be done that would help us to address the crisis that we're experiencing. I don't know what the right amount is, and I would be happy to do it in a way that

[1:47:46 PM]

it was sort of, okay, we use it for that, but it can't be fungible everywhere, but that would give us a little bit more flexibility unless there's a lot of flexibility somewhere in the city manager's budget that I'm not aware of for that. So I just wanted to get a sense of how people felt about that, which I think addresses the flexibility and gives us some running room to continue to address homeless issues, but allow allows us to have her up and running and take advantage of the expertise that she's bringing. >> Mayor Adler: So I agree with that and my sense is that I would be willing to go farther than what you said. So there have been \$1,700 that have been put together for homelessness work and there's probably some other money in the budget as well that deals with homelessness. And I WOU be really eager to see the strategy officer

[1:48:47 PM]

come in and say here's all the resources you're spending on homelessness. This is my recommendation on how you should spend them. I'd really like to know that. And I'd like to know what she would do with that unencumbered by our best assessments of what that would be. I would really like her, Ed, through you, to come back to the council and say this is how I would spend this. I mean, let her come back and say this is too much money and I want to spend this much and I give this back. Or have her come back in and say how to spend it. Rather than just pulling a million dollars out or two million dollars out. I don't know if the right thing to do is to spend seven million dollars on trying to buy old hotels, which some

people have discussed in terms of getting units that people could move into more quickly. I don't know if it's building things. I don't know the kind of

[1:49:48 PM]

homes we need. And I can't tell from the data where the need is within the system. Of our homelessness infrastructure I get differing assessments of that based on conversations with different stakeholders in this city. And I'm really looking forward to having somebody that doesn't come from those stakeholder groups, that comes with an independent eye and says this is what we should do. So I would be comfortable taking all of that money and saying this is how we anticipate we're going to spend it, but as soon as she can let her come back to us with what her proposed allocation of that would be. If we allocate the money next week I would still want her to come back and do the exact same thing that if she had different recommendations to us we could handle with a budget amendment if the council was so inclined to do that.

[1:50:51 PM]

Because I don't think -- I want -- we're hiring this person for a reason. I know she was successful in Orlando. I know she's given advice to other cities. I'd like to take advantage of that. I don't know what she'll recommend. So I would open it up to her more broadly than just a million or two. I want her to own what we're doing. I want her to be responsible for that. And I want her to own the plan that's being implemented. I agree with what you said. I would just go even more broadly than you propose. Kathie? >> I have very strong concerns with that proposal. You know, we have -- I think this is a very important -- I just want to emphasize to anybody watching. These are not decisions that have been kind of fast ones or ones that have been made just because the council thought these were good

[1:51:52 PM]

programs to undertake. In some cases like pay for success was a multi-year effort that involved very considerable stakeholder work and research. It involved two council resolutions. I don't know, Ms. Kim, I think you worked on the legal piece of it for maybe a year until we implemented it. I really appreciate and value and look forward to meeting our new homeless strategy officer, but we've been doing extremely good work in this community and here at council have been supporting that good work that are experts in the field have suggested -- that our experts in the field have suggested. So it is really important to me as we enter into this new relationship that we remember we are at the end of the day the policymakers and that a lot of these decisions have been made based on considerable research and work. And so I can't support suggesting that we're not going to make these allocations. We made allocations in last year's budget cycle that took maybe nine months to

[1:52:53 PM]

actually get that funding into the programs. So any delays in some of this funding, in some respects is unconscionable. As I look down in number 43 -- and councilmember alter, I know that probably in your suggestion we are prefunding pay for success. So it's not like pay for success in your proposal won't go forward. But we have made a commitment to that program, we know we have that financial obligation coming up so to me it makes very good sense given the financial situation that we're facing to prefund that program because we're committed and whether or not somebody recommends altering course on that, we've made the commitment, we've signed the legal agreements, we've worked for years to do it. That program is going ting forward and there are going to be individuals in those units pretty soon, I think. Prefunding that I think makes good sense. >> Alter: Can I just clarify that I was not saying that we not do pay for success. There was a question of whether we prefund three years or four years.

[1:53:53 PM]

I think that's very different than saying we're not prefunding all of it. I just want to clarify what I was suggesting was not -- >> Mayor Adler: And I want to clarify too -- >> Tovo: I was saying I knew you were not suggesting we stop the program. It was because we were prefunding rather than funding this year. I apologize. >> Mayor Adler: Let me clarify as well, there are some things that we've committed to that I think are important that I think we know. I think we could parse it for that. I think pay for success is part of that. The money for the opening up the beds at the wrath rathgaber is something like that. I didn't us to reddecide everything on that list, but by and large I would like her to direct the stuff that is not as time sensitive as that element is. >> Tovo: Then I think we will have to parse the list. I did ask for information in -- again, councilmember

[1:54:53 PM]

alter, I apologize. I was really trying to clarify what I thought to be your intent. Which is exactly what you explained that it was about how much we prefund. Since we know we will have that financial obligation, I support just putting it aside now. But as we look at the list in 43, the first is one-time since tense to fund a property or a shelter, had which is something we've committed to. You know, I'm just skipping around. Arch improvements is something we've committed to and is desperately needed. The women and children's shelter. These are things, the homelessness outreach street team additional resources, I don't think these are things that we want to hesitate on. >> Alter: Kathie, are any of those from the housing trust fund? That's what I'm trying to understand and what I was asking about. >> Tovo: I don't know. >> Alter: I don't think any those are funded from the housing trust fund. And I don't know that the

[1:55:54 PM]

housing trust fund can spend 14 million in the time period that would not allow us to have the choices from the homelessness strategy officer. >> Tovo: I don't know. I guess I was responding to the mayor and to which are's point earlier -- councilmember Casar's point earlier that we not allocate some of this money. I'm just saying if that's going to be a step we take then I'm going to talk about which of these -- which of these we feel like we need to not move forward on. >> Alter: And again, I'm not hearing any of those that are funded through the housing trust fund. >> Tovo: But the mayor, and I thought councilmember Casar -- maybe I misunderstood. I thought the two of you were talking more generally about the allocations that we were proposed to make in the budget, not about the housing trust fund money specifically although some of it may be in there. I don't know if all of this is being funded either. >> Mayor Adler: As a practical matter we'll get her input before she do the budget because she starts here on the ninth. My hope is when she starts on the ninth she can look at what has been allocated and

[1:56:55 PM]

I would like to engage her in a conversation before I make a budget decision. When she starts on the ninth. Because I'm going to have questions for her. And I think there's the opportunity and time to help her understand what's happening with the rathgabbler center and the work being done at the arch. I don't know. I can't imagine her saying don't do those. And I'm so comfortable about that I'm working on the assumption and belief that she's not going to. It's the wider spending request with respect to the 17-plus million that's in the budget, and I don't mean all 17 million of it. You know, subject to the kinds of things we just talked about. I hope on her job she also looks at the other 63, the other 55 or whatever that number is. I hope she looks at that and comes back with that too. But she will be here on the

[1:57:55 PM]

9th. >> Tovo: Aren't we passing the budget on the 10th? It's lake a day later. >> Mayor Adler: On the 10th. >> Tovo: That seems a bit after quick turnaround time. I completely agree that as part of her responsibility she should look at our overall spending and make recommendations, and again I would just say on 43 it looks to me like all of that money is allocated to specific things. So we would need to identify the specification things that -- the specific things that wouldn't be funded if we wanted to create several million that aren't moving forward. And they all look, you know, important, underpass cleanings, communities for recovery. They're all specific allocations at this point. Unless, manager, I'm misunderstanding. I don't see any general categories that haven't been suggested for allocation. >> I'll just note that the budget question was specific to that 17 million and not the broader 63 million.

[1:58:56 PM]

And so I think the answers that councilmember alter is asking for with the housing trust fund would provide a little bit more insight into the rest of that funding so that might be helpful. But there might be more flexibility in some of those uses, not the ones that you're looking at right now. >> Tovo: But they would be existing -- the 14 million is helping fund some of our existing programs. So this is the new spending, but may some of those existing programs would need to be stopped, right, to create that flexibility. I mean, one way or the other. >> Mayor Adler: Do you want to weigh? >> Kitchen: I'm sorry I'm late. I mentioned I couldn't come down. I don't want you to repeat, but -- what are we talking about? >> The homelessness funding direction. >> Kitchen: Okay. >> Casar: I don't think that we're going to get to an end point on this easily if we're talking about

[1:59:56 PM]

cutting, potentially cutting something that everybody here cares about. I think that the real -- that the heart of what we're bringing up is that I want -- maybe not even September 10, maybe September 19, maybe at the beginning of October to give our homeless strategy officer the ability when she shows up to say I think you should change this around and this around and you are going to like and appreciate this even better and people that work on this issue understand it and are going to understand it even better. So I don't think we're talking about that anything in the manager's budget on homelessness is something we don't support because, as you pointed out, this is largely programs that we've all voted for. So I think the direction should be something that gives the homeless strategy officer the flexibility and freedom she can come back to us and talk about how we can do things better. If she can't, I don't know what we're having her come

[2:00:57 PM]

here to do. An open question, a good question is how many more folks are we helping by pre-loading pay for success by multiple years. I understand that it gives them the security that we're going to keep paying for it, but it's an obligation that we have. Maybe we only pre-pay a certain number of years, we can help more folks now. Or a variety of other questions that might be somewhere within that \$62 million that I'm not trying to block her out of coming and telling me those things and I don't think anybody here wants to do that, so I think the direction to me is not to say don't fund these things, it's to say look at this bucket of 60-plus million dollars and if there are ways that you want to come back and either have us reallocate or do a budget amendment or what have you that you think are better in conversation with all of us, just know that's part of what it is that we want you to do. That doesn't mean that we're not going to support the

[2:01:58 PM]

Rathgeber center, doesn't mean we're not going to do the work with the south Austin housing center, we had a unanimous vote on that, but this over a 60 million-dollar bucket of things and we have somebody coming to help us figure out how to do that as effectively as possible. >> Kitchen: I have a suggestion. Could I -- I think the -- this is the way I'm thinking about it is we know that we want our homeless strategy officer to prepare an implementation plan. We adopted that as part of resolution 184. We have an action plan, but an implementation plan we set out in that, you know, time lines, work plans, all that kind of stuff. In order to do an implementation plan, there has to be an analysis of what we're spending money on. So we've got that action we've identified. We've also identified, the city manager has identified an action and I can't remember exactly how you worded it, but an action

[2:02:59 PM]

that involved -- I can't remember if you are going to look for consulting help or whatever, but there was an action identified to also analyze the ways in which we're spending our dollars. It seems to me we already have in place avenues and so the direction might simply say, just acknowledge that our homeless strategy officer will be working on our implementation plan, will be working in concert with whatever happens in terms of the analysis the city manager is talking about, and will report back to us. And that that report may include suggestions on the best ways to allocate our funds. I think that that -- because I don't see the homeless strategy officer being able to make any suggestions to us short of doing the kind of analysis that's necessary to put together an implementation plan, and that kind of analysis is --

[2:04:02 PM]

doesn't take -- it should be done quickly and as quickly as possible, and to my mind setting up a separate -- I think it's confusing to set up a separate direction that doesn't key off of what we already have said that we want to happen. So that would be the way that I would think about it. And, of course,, of course, we want the homeless strategy officers to come back and tell us what she thinks, that's her job. When she comes back to us, I want to know what kind of analysis have you done to arrive at that and that ought to be part of an implementation plan. What she could do is come back and report to us, you know, in two months or whatever on her progress on an implementation plan and where she thinks we are and that sort of thing. And then come back when she is finished with an implementation plan. Regardless, I think that that kind of direction is more specific and more clear to get to the end goal and I

[2:05:03 PM]

think our end goal is the same. I mean what we've been trying to say all along is that we've got -- we want to make sure we're achieving results. So -- >> Casar: And I wasn't totally done talking. I wanted to mention on the housing trust fund that I think we don't have to pull money out of the housing trust fund. We can have direction saying we want to figure how to best use that. It fits within the purpose of the fund and I would be interested in hearing thoughts on councilmember kitchen's proposal, I just don't want too many funds to be appropriated and allocated to a thing or checks already to be sent before -- for example, I don't want to send three or four years of paid for success check if it turns out people say it makes sense to send two years because we need more money for low barrier vouchers and risk pool money.

[2:06:03 PM]

I just would want to hear that. >> Mayor Adler: Jimmy. >> Flannigan: So I'm generally in agreement that I don't think it's productive for us to try and prioritize individual programs at this stage, that it does make more sense to keep the money more generalized. I probably am a little more -- more generalized in my desires that some of my colleagues are, but as I've said in the past I've been really focused on trying to get the budget right and then focusing our conversations to budget time where we can really understand the tradeoffs and the pros and cons of where we put the money. But I think in this new reality, we have to be much more flexible with how we budget and react and reiterate to programs and analysis we give to our staff. My hope is, manager, the budget that you deliver to us has already taken into account all of these things. To my mind, that's kind of the point. And what remains is our

[2:07:03 PM]

ability to adjust to the valuations that come out of the appraisal district and ensuring that the size of the buckets reflects the policy will of the council. You know, I have concerns about the Rathgeber I've expressed before about private entities spending major capital investments without their own funding plan for operations and then coming to the city to fill their funding gaps and, you know, it's a beautiful facility, I've been out there to tour it. They are all trying to do the right thing, but I just don't know how that's a sustainable model if what we're telling the community just good you're go out and build some stuff and the city will pay your bottom line for you. We're not talking about another option which is putting some of this money back into reserves for next year and the third year and the fourth year where we already have identified- budget gaps. I don't know that we need to rush and spend the extra 2.5 million that the appraisal district is telling us that we might have available to us when

[2:08:04 PM]

that's almost a full half a percent -- I mean that's more, right? If you are just talking about general fund, whatever that is, if that keeps our employee pay raises at 2.5 for five or six or seven years by not spending all that money up front, that might be something we want to consider as well. I'm certainly not in a place where -- you kind of talked about the 2.5, want to go maintain that and no one is saying zero next year. If we had voted to give ourselves a 30% pay raise, maybe we should have given our staff 3% as some other governments have done but that's not the way we operate at the city. We are binding by the same raises we give our employees and I'm proud we do that. I hope there's room to talk about reserving some of this revenue for future needs and giving the homeless strategy officer, other departments, giving staff an opportunity

[2:09:05 PM]

to implement and measure results and determine if more investments can be valuable. I want to know more about the telemedicine stuff and if that's going to start working I want to put more money into telemedicine because it will reach more people. If it doesn't work, I'll be confident in expanding the emcort program. I am concerned the fire department and I assume other departments were told if you want new stuff, find it within your budget. My hope was that the CMOS office is thinking cross-departmental on budget allocation. I don't know that I'm confident about that anymore. And that kind of opens a Pandora's box about slicing and dicing. Just to wrap up my comment here, the decision that we're going to make next week is not the last decision and I think if we keep ourselves at a high level, keep it focused on similar to how we did it last year, which I thought was very productive and as I

[2:10:07 PM]

know we will be doing on fire and EMS and other departments we will continue to work through this process as we start dealing closer to a future 3.5 budget. I just hope there might be some support for putting the money away for a rainy day. >> Mayor Adler: Alison. >> Alter: So I looked at number 43 now and it only has, as far as I can tell in my quick glance, it only has about a million five in a housing fund that is being used on homelessness. We're putting 14 million into the housing trust fund. I don't know what that's been spent on, I've been asking, I don't have that information. There would be a lot of things that would be longer term for housing that are important that I might not prioritize over things we could be doing now to adjust the homeless crisis. And since I do not believe we can spend all that money, you know, within the time frame, I would rather leave some of that flexible, but

[2:11:07 PM]

again, I don't know what it's being spent on because I don't have that information. But it doesn't seem like it requires any reallocation of the homelessness. I think we could still have a conversation about pay

for success for the fourth year, the fifth year out, about whether we want to pre-pay that much. That is not to say that we won't fulfill that obligation, but, you know, it might make it all that much more successful if we spent it on something else so, you know, down the line. And I don't have that information now. I understand and I appreciate the intention that went into putting those funds in both of those funds, and I see how that follows our strategic direction, but I still think we could be looking at those. But again, that's absent knowing what housing trust fund was supposed to be spent on beyond the million and a half. >> Mayor Adler: Pio.

[2:12:07 PM]

>> Renteria: What I would like to see is some of that money in the trust fund is dedicated to certain areas and certain programs, so I would like to see if you could give us a copy of how that money is put aside and which, you know, what bank -- what it's focused for and dedicated to so we can see it. Because some of that money you can't touch, you know, just like the homestead preservation money that's there, the trust fund, or the money that's come in from the development at the T.O.D. That money is dedicated to, you know, some of that bonus money and dedicated to have to be used within a half a mile radius of where that money is being generated. We have to look at all of those and it probably would help a lot if we saw the report on how that money is set aside and for what purpose. >> Mayor Adler: Okay.

[2:13:11 PM]

Kathy. >> Tovo: Yeah, and so, you know, councilmember alter, I've thought more about your suggestion and I think that is a conversation worth having about maybe the fifth year out of pay for success. That maybe that money could be put to -- I've changed my opinion on that piece and I think that's it. I don't know if I agree yet, but I think it's certainly may make sense. But I guess my -- if we approached it the way councilmember kitchen said about having the analysis, which is what I understood to be kind of before the homeless strategy officer, I think that's -- I think if it's framed in that way, it's fine, but my real concern here is that if we're -- I don't want to leave it open ended that worry not making commitments to spend the money in these ways because I'm afraid the practical outcome of saying we're asking her to evaluate all of this new spending and come back and let us know her recommendations, the practical impact of that is

[2:14:11 PM]

that we won't move forward with knows until she's had an opportunity to do that review. As I look through this list, I see very few on first glance that I wouldn't want to move forward as soon as we can. And so if there is an amendment coming forward to suggest that some of these projects not move

forward pending her review, I would want to be very specific and very targeted about those and not have it be sort of a blanket we want her to review all of the spending plan. I just don't think the staff will move forward with those contracts or move forward with the hiring of the host team or move forward the allocations absent that review. I can't more specific ones, but I think in August in our early meeting in August we had -- if not August, in June we had contracts coming to us that, again, we approved in last year's budget. It just takes that much time for these contracts to be executed. Things that we're excited

[2:15:11 PM]

about that we're telling the community are in our budget may not happen for months and months and months. If we have an additional delay pending a review, I think that's really putting out some of those programs, you know, in my opinion, far too long. So hopefully, hopefully the suggestion that councilmember kitchen made for kind of that analysis, and again a more targeted approach to which programs among this list we want -- we are comfortable delaying would be -- would be my request. Those of you who sort of supported that, does that seem doable? >> Mayor Adler: What I don't know is, for me, I really want to hear what the new strategy officer says. I mean, I -- we have done our best job of trying to indicate what we think is important and I believe the things we've indicated are important are real important. I'm comfortable with --

[2:16:12 PM]

with, I mean I think it just makes it more cumbersome to approve it and then give the flexibility for the strategy officer to come back and propose budget amendments a month later. But I would want her to be able to know that she has that flexibility to be able to do that because I want to benefit from -- from her expertise. There's some things I think that are really time sensitive. I think in my mind opening up the Rathgeber center qualifies for that. I would have to go back through and parse the list and I really haven't. But I really want to hear -- I just really, really want to hear what she says, and it could be that she comes here and says, look, I can't give you an opinion on that until I've been here for a month. I mean, I don't know what -- I just don't know what she's going to say. But whatever it is she's going to say I want to hear. So I just want to hear it. I recognize the concern

[2:17:13 PM]

about not stopping things. I would be happy to go through the list. I'm happy -- I probably am happy of approving everything, but for me to make it clear that if she comes back later and says this is a direction I would like to be able to argue to the council is something you should do differently, I want her to know that she has that flexibility and that freedom to be able to do that and then as the policy makers we could decide whether or not that's something that we want to do. But I'm anxious to have -- I'm anxious

to hear what she says. Ann. >> Kitchen: Well, a couple of things. Her first day is September 9th, right? And the -- as I think it was Rodney that told us that -- yes, that you all are already in conversation with her. So if -- if we're concerned -- I don't think we have to wait till she gets here to understand

[2:18:14 PM]

whether she's going to tell us she needs a month. I don't know how we could expect a homeless strategy offer hit the ground, review our budget, understand what's going on in our community, talk to all our service providers, really understand what's actually happening as opposed to what is said is being happening in a month. I mean, to my mind that is -- that's not a realistic expectation for her. The other thing is that I think we need to -- we need to set her up for -- if we just want to know what she's going to say right now, we should ask her right now and we should ask her before we vote on the 10th. The other thing I would say is we all want the same thing in terms of working towards metrics and working towards the best use of our dollars. That requires analysis. And that requires some time. And what I don't want to end

[2:19:15 PM]

up in, as councilmember tovo these items. We know they are needed. And besides, you know, we have a fair amount of expertise in our staff right now. I don't want to discount the work that our staff has been doing for a long time. They are not -- they are not unexperienced or inexperienced at what they are doing. So maybe we need to -- I hear the concern wanting to hear what the homeless strategy officer might say. There might be another way to set that up instead of -- of setting up a question about whether we should proceed with any items. So Rodney, I would, you know, I would just ask is it possible to have a conversation with her before the 10th if we need to do that? Or the second thing is I really just feel like what we need to do is set up some time points at which she reports back to us. She understands -- you know, understand her full -- her

[2:20:17 PM]

full scope, tie it to an implementation plan and analysis. If she comes back and suggests that she wants us to change this or this, my question to her is going to be based on what? Based on what analysis of what's going on in our community because what we need for our community is community specific. And her expertise will be helpful in knowing what to look for. But it has to be tied to what's going on right now in our community and she needs time to do that. So I share the concern that councilmember tovo raised. I do not want to set up the expectation we're not going to move forward on things because we're waiting for her to do something and we're not giving her a realistic amount of time to do it. So

that's why I suggested that we tie it to implementation plan and a reasonable report back to us on the implementation plan. And we make it really clear that we're going to proceed

[2:21:19 PM]

with things, we're talking about this being an emergency in our community. We just can't afford to slow it down and I don't believe that anything that our staff has recommended is not needed. And I respect the expertise and experience that they bring to the table. >> Mayor Adler: Alison. >> Alter: Did you want to comment or just there to answer? >> Sure. Rodney Gonzalez, assistant city manager, and I did want to respond to councilmember kitchen's question and concern about talking to Laurie. We have tried to engage, unfortunately of course hurricane Dorian has put a block, if you will, in some of that communication. Hurricane Dorian for a short time had been forecasted to hit Orlando, which is where Laurie is at. Fortunately it looks like the hurricane is going to bypass Florida, which is great, but nonetheless Laurie has been spending a lot of time in preparation in the event the hurricane did make landfall. And that being said, of course, with Laurie moving in Monday, she is packing up

[2:22:19 PM]

her stuff and moving her life to Austin. She's got a daughter and husband and there's a lot of preparation. We are going to try to, of course, reach out to Laurie before Monday, but for certain on Monday we will be having conversations with Laurie about the budget. But yes, to the extent that we can and that Laurie has the time, we certainly will try to have those conversations as we have had or as we've tried before. But most definitely Monday, for sure. >> Ann, you came in late and I just want to explain this was predicated by me asking if there was a way to use housing trust fund money or pay for success money to create a pot of money that could be used by the homeless strategy officer to take appropriate next steps that then would be earmarked to go back into those funds. I wasn't sure about what the appropriate amount is. And I agree with you that we

[2:23:21 PM]

need analysis, and in asking that question I was not taking money away from homelessness, I was identifying -- I was asking the question whether we, given the priority we want to put on addressing our homelessness crisis, maybe we want to say we don't need to put that extra 7 million into the housing trust fund at this stage. Maybe we don't need to pre-pay as you throw for success for four years. Maybe that's not the thing that's going to get us ultimately what we want to get. And I just want to clarify that. There were other comments that took us off that because I think that is still a very relevant question and I'm looking forward to getting the detail on the housing trust fund so we know what we might be trading off and the homeless strategy officer may say to spend the money on those things. But I do not believe

that given number of people we have to hire in nhcd, we won't be given another three or four months and flexibility to do that if we were to give ourselves the breathing room to do that.

[2:24:22 PM]

But again, I don't have the answer to that question. But I do think, you know, we're doing a lot of things on housing, we have a lot of flexibility. From Mr. Renteria, I wanted to mention I'm talking about the part of the housing trust fund that was additional money so the money that was going to it and earmarked is there. I do want to point out to folks one vaguery of how we're doing the housing trust fund that I think people need to be aware of when we set up the grove, we said we were buying affordable housing. And that was supposed to come out of the housing trust fund. Well, that money is not in there yet because nobody accounted for the fact the tax money doesn't come in for years later, but our payment is due in may. So that is coming out of another pot and being paid back into the housing trust fund. And, you know, there are lots of vickrys of this and I want to add that so if we

[2:25:23 PM]

think about any other developments, this is also an issue that came up with the congress, the statesman property that there is a time lag for when the tax revenue comes in and we need to be kind of accounting for that. So that's just a little aside that I think is relevant as we talk about this. >> Mayor, I just wanted to provide one point of clarity on budge question 43 because it's come up. There are two items list understand budget question 43 that have listed budget stabilization reserve fund. They total \$7.2 million. That's the \$7.2 million, those funds are being transferred to thousandsing trust fund. It's correct the way it's worded, it is coming from the reserve fund, but it's being transferred to the housing trust fund, it's that \$7 million influx is what's reflected on budget question 43 as being the budget stabilization reserve fund. >> Tovo: Would you mind pointing to --

[2:26:24 PM]

>> Second page, \$2.2 million to provide legal and other assistance for tenants facing eviction or displacement. At the bottom of page 3, \$5 million for rental housing assistance. That's to provide more permanent supportive housing units. The source of those funds is the budget stabilization reserve fund but we're transferring it to the housing trust fund, the \$7 million one-time influx. >> Tovo: I see the displacement mitigation for 2.2 million. What you are saying it's saying budget stabilization, but that's being transferred to 2 housing trust fund and funding it. >> That's correct. >> Tovo: What was the other? >> Under reempowerment, it's \$5 million. It's listed as -- department is listed as neighborhood housing community development reserve fund. That's another one that starts in the budget stabilization fund

and transferred to the housing trust fund and it's for that purpose. >> Tovo: I think that may be the answer, councilmember

[2:27:25 PM]

alter, you were looking for. If that's five and seven, that's 12. And the other funds listed as the housing trust fund were about a million five, I think you said, right? So that's about 13.5. >> It's five and 2.2 that I just researched, that's he have is even. There's another 1.3 listed on this response. That gets you to eight and a half. And the remaining six million dollars or so is what the housing department, that's kind of like the regular allocation to the housing trust fund and they are just working up the details what the plan is for those funds in fiscal year 20. But in regards to the homelessness response, everything is contained in here. >> Tovo: Okay. >> Mayor Adler: Anybody else have any questions for staff on the budget? Any other items? Does anybody else want to daylight at this point, not to be held to it, what their priorities might be? Ann. >> Kitchen: I just want to

[2:28:27 PM]

daylight. I don't have any questions. I've talked to staff about it. There's two items that are not -- well, let's see. There's two items that I'm still considering bringing forward, and those relate to -- here they are. One relates to a recommendation -- well, in addition to -- I'm not going to go through all the list of -- obviously I am in support of the first response to the mental health crisis items and there are other items too. What I was going to bring forward is a budget -- potentially a budget direction item that is not a dollar item, but it relates to the surplus from customer assistance in Austin energy. A proposal was made to -- to the council to consider increasing the discount from 10% to 15% in order to address the surplus on a one-time basis. Instead of just putting the

[2:29:27 PM]

surplus back into the -- into the budget. I will flesh that out for folks. We're still doing some research into that. But the question in front of us is what to do with the surplus and whether or not to just increase the amount of the discount for the low-income folks that are receiving the discount now from 10% to 15%. Or what -- because the only other thing that would happen with those dollars is they would just go back into -- into the Austin energy's budget and would not be used for assisting low-income folks. So again, there's more details that I need to get to folks. I'll post it on the message board as soon as I've got that together. It wouldn't be a budget difference as far as I'm understanding. So the second item has to do with a recommendation that was made by the board of adjustment. A while back they sent forward a memo to us asking

[2:30:29 PM]

us to consider lower the fees that were related to residential permitting. Not commercial, but residential permitting. And they recommended lowering to 500, and they expressed their concern with relating to the ability of lower income families and middle income -- or families in general of being able to come forward with requests for variances. So I was interested in that because I think it might relate to our policy direction to assist families. I think councilmember Garza had brought a resolution a while back that focused on the difficulties that families have sometimes in terms of permitting processes. So again, there's more information that I need to put together in a package for folks and I'll post it on the message board for consideration. The -- if we were to go down the road, the price tag on

[2:31:32 PM]

that would be some -- at most would be 153,000. There might be ways to lower that, so I wanted to bring that forward because I thought it was important to consider that recommendation in light of the policies that we've talked about for families. So again, that's -- I'll post that so people can think about it. I wanted to just highlight it so people were aware that I was thinking about that. >> Mayor Adler: Okay. Anybody else want to air thoughts they are thinking or priorities? Paige. >> Ellis: Quickly, I don't have a long speech or rundown or anything. This was discussion at last work session about the clean community fee and I just wanted to speak that a few of us were on board to that and I've spoken to Ed van eenoo about what we are allowed to do with that fee or what it could be used on. I haven't mapped out what that programming looks like, but I just wanted to say I'm in support of using as much

[2:32:35 PM]

as we can of that just to given some of the circumstances we're trying to address in stun right now kind of about -- Austin right now kind of about greenbelt cleanups and watershed protection and things like that. I think it could be helpful given our current circumstances to look at how that could be used as well. >> Mayor Adler: Kathy. >> Tovo: I thought that was a good suggestion last time and I -- I may have misunderstood, but I thought that was one of the recommendations that came forward from staff to use \$500,000 from the clean community fee. Is that -- what you are laying out is same as you are describing, councilmember Ellis? >> What I was discussing was specific to homeless encampment cleanups at parks which we were told would be appropriate use of the fee. High end \$500,000 may be lower -- >> Tovo: What? >> The 500,000 I showed on the slide is the high end to do the work. If it ends up being 300,

[2:33:36 PM]

that's what we'll bring back on the 10th. >> Tovo: Is that what you had in mind? >> Ellis: Yes, that was some of my discussion with Ed. There's rules what you can and can't use it on and trying to make the best use of a community clean fee as it relates to trash pickup and things like that. >> Mayor Adler: My concern, you just said cleanup in parks. I don't know if I heard you correctly. I would hope 245 we would be also taking looking at cleaning up under the overpasses and other places where we have camps, where we have issues that are not in parks. You know, together with the idea of -- of employing folks that are experiencing homelessness perhaps to be able to help with that. Either generally or in places where they -- where they find themselves living. So for me my interest would

[2:34:36 PM]

be in having more broadly than just cleaning up in parks. >> Just our thought on that was that we do have fairly substantial budget currently for underpass cleanups, cleanups on open space areas, funded either through public works or transportation or the drainage utility fee. I believe it's not that fee wouldn't be an appropriate source, but there's existing alternative sources so if we needed to do more of that we could increase the transportation fee and use that for cleanups. But for the parks cleanups there wasn't an alternative source. The clean community fee was something a new idea your office brought up and so that's why we were focusing on the parks. >> Mayor Adler: And that's good if it funded elsewhere. I hope we would be looking at using that in conjunction with the employment programs that we have. I don't know how we staff the crews that do that work or if there's a way for us to hand out the purple bags and pay people for return of those purple bags that are

[2:35:38 PM]

policing those areas or just trying to take advantage of that kind of symbiotic result. That might be good. Jimmy. >> Flannigan: Something I remember talking about earlier in the budget process or might have been in some of my one on ones, we have to adopt the tax rate annually at a very certain schedule that fees can be amended at any time. So we can kind of explore these issues now, but if we come up with a good idea in October, November, December, we can still explore them on the fee side of the equation. I think it might be good for staff to put together a rundown of all the ways we are cleaning our community so that maybe council would have a better understanding, we can communicate that back to our constituents. You know, one of the things -- including where cleanups are happening by other jurisdictions or maybe should be. That's maybe not the question I'm asking staff for, but when I see litter on the side of a txdot

[2:36:38 PM]

property adjoining the highway, not the underpass, but between -- between exits and there's litter on the side of the highway, whose job is it to clean that up? Is it coming on us? Is txdot on a delayed schedule and not getting to it? That kind of information might be good. >> Mayor Adler: Alison. >> Alter: So on the clean community fee, can you also provide information if that can be used for field mitigation for wildfire? So if we had our crews become supervisory, we could hire folks whether it was through the workforce program or otherwise to help to do some of the wildfire mitigation. That's the actual labor part of that. So if you could let us know that, that would be great. The etj does not pay the clean community fee so there would be some limitations to the value of doing that. But it might be helpful

[2:37:39 PM]

within the preserves or other places. >> I've had a number of conversations with the attorney's office on the clean community fee. I don't want to speak for them but it's a topic maybe we need a memo from the law office about the clean community fee and the extent it can be used. It is fairly narrowly defined and some of the things being discussed might be outside the scope of it, but I would want them to provide you that definitive answer as opposed to myself. We'll get that done for you. >> Alter: Thank you. One thing I will be bringing forward is a budget rider provide direction for human resource department may be able to provide us savings with our retirees. So there's some tax savings if you use this financial product both for the city and for our retirees. And I don't have enough information to say we have to use this product, but it

[2:38:40 PM]

is something the county is considering and there's potentially savings that come from changing the way that process works that would both to the city and retirees and I would like to see any savings go into pension reform for whatever is involved in that. So that's something new. I think it should be pretty clear right now that my highest priority is wildfire. We have the audit that came back and identified particularly the land management and preserve management issues. It's not a huge amount of money. It's about 120,000 to do the plan and 100,000 for some related infrastructure for preserves, and then there's a 95,000 for preserve manager which is related to that. And I will be working with

[2:39:42 PM]

chief baker and chief Davis on wildfire. I think that is more specific to the wildland division and I think for -- that that would be -- we would be able to make some important progress at this stage for under 500,000 there and it might be significantly [inaudible] To kind of work through that. I'm supportive of some investment in mental health. I'm still trying to get my head around whether we should be doing all of that at once. And then I have some -- several outstanding budget questions for finding additional

funds, and I'm still interested in having this conversation about the pay for success and the housing trust fund and thinking that through if we do find that we don't see any room within the housing trust fund to hold off, then I would want to think about that fourth year of the --

[2:40:42 PM]

or the third year of the pay for success for paying out that in advance. There's a number of other things that folks have mentioned that I would support, but I don't know yet about the funding. >> Mayor Adler: On the cleanup issue, I can't find it right now, there was an email we all got from the -- from the ems employee that heads the association that spoke about the work that they were doing with the community of folks experiencing homelessness, and it listed, I think, some number of locations that they are called to allot. I'm going to see if I can find that. I hope that we describe the cleanup in a way that provides a flexibility for staff to be able to hit these locations, and I'm thinking that those locations include things that are both not in parks

[2:41:44 PM]

and also not under overpasses. So I wouldn't want us to define the ability in a way that limits the ability and discretion of staff to be able to go to the places most needed. I'll see if I can find that email. >> [Inaudible] >> Mayor Adler: Okay. Thanks. Would you as I understand it to him too? So I would just cover that generally. I'm pretty supportive of the mental health funding. I think that comes at the intersection of two things that are real critical to our community. First the homelessness challenge we have, but also what's happening all too often it seems on first responders calls for folks that are -- we know are dealing with some kind of mental health complication. It's at that intersection and I think that's real important. I want to make sure we're funding enough for the census. You know, and making sure that we have the -- probably

[2:42:48 PM]

perhaps more leveraged money than anything else we could be doing. And I'm not sure -- I look at other cities who seem to be putting millions of dollars against it and we're not. I know we have a committed group in the community and there's going to be some private philanthropy I hope that helps with that, but just to look and see what it is we're doing. There's like \$100,000 in our budget just to touch base and see if there's more we should be doing or more we should be doing with the county. The county has hired and is paying the staff component. That's key on that. But in addition to them doing that and us doing our 100, maybe there's more to be done. I really hope this budget addresses the fte or that position in development services to make sure we have somebody that's on staff that has the special competence to be able to calibrate the -- the bonus, the density bonuses that I think we're going to see

[2:43:48 PM]

more and more of as we approve the land development code so we have that expertise in house. That expertise we and the community feel confident is giving us disinterested answers and tolerances. I don't know if that's a new fte or getting assurances that an fte within -- or money to the department would be funded that way. I also support the abortion access issue, the bridge to safety program for relationship violence. It's a successful program and goes to that element of where we see arise in violent crime within our city. Most of that being directed toward domestic violence. We've addressed the cleanup crews. I won't address that more. I support the continued rollout with the 30 officers in public safety. I'll go through the additional information that

[2:44:49 PM]

we've gotten today with respect to the vacancy items, but generally speaking I'll say I'm supportive of us continuing on the program that we started. I'm going to keep my fingers crossed on the Barton springs lifeguard question, that's not going to be that big a number, but it seems to be something that doesn't seem to be fair. What I heard the afscme folks come up and testify, my sense was in early conversations with afscme, it sounded like the 2.5% was an appropriate place for us to be, but I think in the context of the conversation about the 3.5 cap, there's concern, as one testified, there were three years in a row where there were zero raises in the 2008ish time frame. My understanding from all the work being done, even at 3.5%, we just don't see us needing to make the 3.5% by

[2:45:52 PM]

changing historical patterns on pay raises for our employees. I'd like to know if that's true, if that's true, I really want to give that assurance to our workforce, but that seems to me to be the biggest question. I think that we need to look at the fire protection issue. I want to read that material and understand that better, but being able to push in that direction or initiate additional work to express the priority seems to me to be appropriate. I am a huge supporter of the pay for success model for homelessness. I'm real eager to have concentrated attention to the folks most carry-on likely homeless in our community, while our numbers remain relatively static, it has gone up over the last five years, four or five percent last year, but a 55%

[2:46:53 PM]

increase of folks that are chronically experiencing homelessness on our streets. So really being able to work against that I think is real important. I support the pay for success model, but I would also need to understand better the last year of that program. Maybe it's better for us to put aside, you know, some money and just pay -- create a reserve for that over time. If there was greater need in this budget for us to -- to do things. And I am still working my way through some of the ideas I've heard my colleagues raise and anticipate they will continue to raise on the message board. Anybody else want to weigh in or give any thoughts? Then I think we're done. Ten till 3:00. This meeting is adjourned.