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WHEREAS, in mid-February 2021, Austin and the State of Texas experienced winter storms unprecedented in their duration and low temperatures; and

WHEREAS, damage to power generation plants and an increase in energy use statewide caused the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) to mandate forced outages, and approximately 40 percent of Austin Energy's customers were left without power for multiple days during some of the coldest weather on record; and

WHEREAS, the prolonged power outages caused considerable physical suffering and emotional trauma; and

WHEREAS, the combination of the ice storms and power outages caused substantial damage to private and public infrastructure, prompting a proliferation of burst pipes, the rapid depletion of city water capacity, a citywide boil water notice, and interrupted water service for hundreds of individuals weeks after the event; and

WHEREAS, though road conditions were treacherous and many city employees and their families were themselves suffering from the storm's impacts, City of Austin first responders, utility employees, and other staff worked tirelessly to repair electric and water infrastructure, to provide medical care, to transport vulnerable individuals, to staff shelters, and to meet community needs in a myriad of other ways; and

WHEREAS, the City Manager and his staff will conduct an after-action analysis, as is typical with an event of this magnitude; and

22 **WHEREAS**, on February 25, 2021, City Council voted to conduct its own
23 process to analyze “the circumstances leading to the crises caused by prolonged
24 interruptions of energy and water, including critical needs related to shelter, food,
25 water, and medical care” and to develop recommendations and implementation plans;
26 and

27 **WHEREAS**, public conversations will assist decision-makers and Austinites in
28 better understanding the course of events that unfolded, as a means of acknowledging
29 the extraordinary efforts of city staff while also creating a space for identifying
30 strategies for building a more resilient, better-prepared city and community response
31 in the inevitable event of future disasters; **NOW, THEREFORE,**

32 **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF**
33 **AUSTIN:**

34 The Council will conduct a series of focused conversations with briefings from
35 staff and community partners. Sessions will be focused on critical topics including
36 energy, water, sheltering, communications, emergency operations, intergovernmental
37 coordination, coordination with community organizations, and other related topics. The
38 draft work plan and schedule appear as Exhibit A.

39 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

40 The City Auditor is directed to undertake an audit of the city’s response to the
41 winter emergency. The Auditor will refine the scope of the audit in coordination with
42 the Council’s Audit and Finance committee, but at a minimum, the audit will consider

the following topics: City's pre-storm preparations (including outreach to vulnerable populations, establishment of shelters, communications with the public, winterization of city facilities, and coordination with community groups, volunteers, and other governmental entities); response during the storm (including briefings to and coordination with Council, interdepartmental and intergovernmental coordination, communications with the public, the establishment of warming centers, and other steps taken to ensure safety of staff and community members); and recovery operations post-storm (including the procurement, equitable allocation, and distribution of food and water resources; coordination with community groups; communication and coordination with Council). The audit shall highlight the steps the City has taken to ensure it can continue critical operations during a disaster as well as contingency plans in the event that critical services are not available, and the audit shall examine how the City's Emergency Operations Center functioned during the emergency in light of best practices in emergency management.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The Council creates the Winter Storm Uri Emergency Response Task Force under section 2-1-2(E) of the City Code for the purpose of holding open public listening sessions during which individuals and organizational representatives can share information, experiences, and recommendations related to the winter storm and resulting crises and to develop recommendations based on these sessions. The task force's role will be to create a structured public space for these comments and to

64 summarize these into a final report for the City Council. The task force should structure
65 its hearings in such a manner as to provide opportunities for as many people as possible
66 to participate within the limited timeframe. The City Manager shall provide appropriate
67 staff to advise the task force.

68 Each of the following commissions shall appoint one member to the task force:
69 African American Resource Advisory Commission, Asian American Quality of Life
70 Advisory Commission, College Student Commission, Commission for Women,
71 Commission on Seniors, Commission on Veterans Affairs, Early Childhood Council,
72 Hispanic/Latino Quality of Life Resource Advisory Commission, Human Rights
73 Commission, LGBTQ Quality of Life Advisory Commission, and the Mayor's
74 Committee on People with Disabilities. Each commission shall designate a member no
75 later than April 8, 2021. If a commission is unable to meet within a timely fashion to
76 designate a member, then the chair of that commission shall either serve as the designee
77 or shall delegate that responsibility to another member.

78 The task force shall convene no later than the week of April 12, 2021, to elect a
79 chair and vice chair. The task force shall begin hearings no later than the week of April
80 19, 2021, as long as at least five of the appointing commissions have designated
81 representatives. The task force shall conclude its hearings no later than June 30, 2021,
82 and submit a final report to the City Council no later than July 30, 2021.

83 A quorum of the task force shall be six members. No vacancy in the membership
84 of the task force shall impair the right of a quorum to exercise all of the rights and
85 perform all of the duties of the task force.

86 Any member of the task force may be removed by Council for malfeasance,
87 failure to attend three or more consecutive meetings for any reason whatsoever, or
88 willful neglect of duty.

89 The task force shall be subject to the Open Meetings requirements of City Code
90 Chapter 2-1 and the provisions of Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code (*Open*
91 *Meetings Act*).

92 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

93 The City Manager is directed to create a “SpeakUp Austin!” public portal, linked
94 from the Community Task Force web page, where members of the public can submit
95 written or video testimony describing their experiences, observations, and
96 recommendations. Public testimony, images, and other information submitted via the
97 online portal or through the task force hearings shall become part of an archive at the
98 Austin History Center created for this purpose.

99
00 **ADOPTED:** _____, 2021 **ATTEST:** _____
01 Jannette S. Goodall
02 City Clerk