



Annual Internal Review

This report covers the time period of 7/1/2020 to 6/30/2021

Water and Wastewater Commission

1. The Water and Wastewater Commission mission statement is set forth in [2-1-186 of the Code of the City of Austin, Texas](#) which states:
 - (A) The Water and Wastewater Commission members should reside inside the utility's service area. Not more than two members should be involved in development or development-related activities.
 - (B) The purpose of the Water and Wastewater Commission is to:
 - (1) review, analyze, and advise the City Council on the policies and resources relating to the city water and wastewater utility and water quality; and
 - (2) assist the City Council in ensuring that the City's residents are provided with an adequate, economical, and potable supply of water and a stable, economical and environmentally safe system of wastewater disposal.
 - (C) The Commission shall act as an advisory body to the City Council and shall review programs and make recommendations regarding:
 - (1) the protection and integrity of the water resources for the City;
 - (2) minimization of water quality impacts to downstream areas;
 - (3) implementation of programs that achieve goals and objectives relating to water supply management, water demand management, and land water quality control;
 - (4) the fiscal solvency of said programs; and
 - (5) the fiscal health of the utility.

(D) The Commission may conduct an annual review of the commission's goals and objectives, and the activities needed to achieve these goals and objectives in the following areas, for the year covered by the program:

- (1) water supply distribution;
- (2) water demand and conservation management;
- (3) wastewater treatment and collection;
- (4) water quality;
- (5) service area master planning and capital improvement project development;
- (6) utility operating budget;
- (7) rates and fees; and
- (8) citizen education.

(E) The Commission may review and make reports and recommendations to the City Council, or other appropriate Boards and Commissions, concerning the following matters:

- (1) water and wastewater capital improvement program proposals;
- (2) water and wastewater bond programs;
- (3) monitoring of capital recovery fee revenues on a quarterly basis, and review of capital recovery fee dollar amount on an annual basis from the effective date of capital recovery fee ordinance;
- (4) review of the City's annual budget proposal for the water and wastewater utility;
- (5) quarterly review of water and wastewater ending balances;
- (6) cost effectiveness and financial impact on water supply and water conservation programs;
- (7) water and wastewater tap and connection fees;
- (8) quarterly review of the utility's total bonded indebtedness, including:
 - (a) contracts bonds approval, issuance, and expenditure: proposed and approved by Council action, and issued;
 - (b) revenue bonds approval, issuance and expenditure: proposed and approved by Council action, and issued; and

- (c) municipal utility district bonds;
 - (9) water and wastewater service extension requests and policy;
 - (10) water treatment water supply, capacity, and demand projections;
 - (11) water and wastewater treatment capacity, loadings, and effluent quality and quantity by the City on a monthly basis;
 - (12) proposed and existing wastewater package treatment plants within the City's extraterritorial jurisdiction;
 - (13) desired service areas that the City should serve and the timing of the service;
 - (14) creation of area package treatment plant and alternative wastewater system conservation proposals;
 - (15) creation or modification of municipal utility districts, water control and improvement districts, and all other entities authorized by the Texas Water Code;
 - (16) water and wastewater treatment processes;
 - (17) review and recommendation to the City Council regarding all water and wastewater rates and fees;
 - (18) annual review of the effectiveness of erosion and sedimentation controls and drainage criteria in protecting water quality; and
 - (19) monthly review of water and wastewater discharge by the City.
- (F) The Commission may obtain information from Austin Water and communicate to the City Council as follows:
- (1) coordination with staff to develop programs to implement Commission duties and responsibilities;
 - (2) evaluation of the economic feasibility and impacts of Commission goals and objectives programs;
 - (3) coordination with the staff time and resource requirements for liaison activities with the Commission;
 - (4) policy and budgetary recommendations to the City Council relating to program implementation;
 - (5) periodic review of staff progress toward successful completion of utility programs;

- (6) review of staff reports and studies relating to Commission programs, including economic and rate impacts and environmental effects;
 - (7) review of development of program implementation strategies; and
 - (8) review of monitoring and enforcement of programs.
 - (G) The Commission shall promote close cooperation and open communication between the City Council, other City Boards, Commissions and committees, City departments and individuals, and institutions and agencies concerned with the policies and procedures and operation, maintenance and construction of the Water and Wastewater Utility so that all similar activities in the City may be coordinated to secure the greatest public welfare.
2. For the duration of July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021, the Water and Wastewater Commission successfully completed the following activities and achievements:
- a. Reviewed and recommended FY 2020-2021 Austin Water's annual Operations and Maintenance Budget, Capital Budget, Capital Spending Plan, Financial Forecast, water and wastewater service rates, fees and charges.
 - b. Convened the Budget Committee; Including Susan Turrieta, Travis Michel, Jesse Penn, Grant Fisher and William Moriarty (served through 6/30/2021 – and met on 5/24/21 and 6/30/21) to review various matters of Austin Water's proposed budget, including review of the following items and topics:
 - i. financial forecast for Fiscal Year 2022-2026 and Fiscal Year 2021-2022 proposed budget.
 - ii. Capital Improvement Program (CIP), including debt service and cash transfers related to CIP spending and the proposed CIP spending plan
 - iii. Capital Recovery Fee waiver projections.
 - iv. customer assistance programs, Community Benefit Charge implementation, and COVID-19 billing relief.
 - v. financial benchmarks and goals and debt management strategies;
 - vi. operations and maintenance budget assumptions;
 - vii. proposed Fiscal Year 2021-2022 water and wastewater rates and bill impacts;
 - viii. Fiscal Year 2021-2022 temporary rate reductions due to the Winter Storm Uri weather event;

- c. The Commission reviewed and provided input on
 - i. COVID-19 impacts on Austin Water operations, staff and finances
 - ii. Austin Water FY 2020 – 2021 proposed budget
 - iii. Water Forward plan implementation
 - iv. Minority Business Enterprise/Women Business Enterprise procurement process
 - v. My ATX Water (Advanced Metering Infrastructure) project implementation and customer portal preview
 - vi. Review of Draft Austin Climate Equity Plan
 - vii. Zebra Mussel Mitigation Update
 - viii. Utility District and Special District Update
 - ix. Multi-Family Customer Assistance Program launch
 - x. Harmful Algal Blooms in Lady Bird Lake
 - xi. Austin Water Facility Planning for Atlas 14 Flood Risks
 - xii. Mobility Project Planning Updates
 - xiii. Austin Water February Winter Storm Event Briefings
 - xiv. Lead Services Strategies Update
 - xv. Customer Assistance Program (CAP) Qualification Concerns
- d. The Commission reviewed and provided its recommendations on 87 items considered by the Austin City Council regarding Austin Water’s operations and business activities within the scope of its missions and annual goals and objectives.
- e. Water and Wastewater Commissioner William Moriarty participated in and continues to participate in the Austin Integrated Water Resource Planning Community Task Force and provides updates to the Commission on the activities of the Task Force.
- f. Water and Wastewater Commissioner Nhat Ho served as the Commission’s appointee to the Joint Sustainability Committee. Commissioner Ho provided updates to the Commission. His term as a Commissioner expired on 2/28/2021.
- g. The Commission formed a Winter Storm Working Group to advise Austin Water in its After-Action Review of the Winter Storm Uri emergency event. Commissioner Christianne Castleberry served and continues to serve as the Chair, Commissioner William Moriarty as Vice-Chair, with Commissioner Jesse Penn, Commissioner Grant Fisher, and Commissioner Christy Williams serving as additional members. The working group initially met with Austin Water staff on April 28, 2021 and subsequently met on May 17, 2021 and June 16, 2021. Additional meetings are scheduled for July 12, 2021, August 18, 2021 and September 15, 2021. Focus

topics include public communications, drinking water system storage, water pressure management, and storm impacts on pipelines and treatment plants.

3. All activities and achievements of the Water and Wastewater Commission during July 1, 2020– June 30, 2021 were in compliance with the mission statement of the Commission as outlined in the Ordinance.
4. The Water and Wastewater Commission as an advisory (non-sovereign) body to the Austin City Council establishes the following goals and objectives for the year:
 - a. Continue to review programs and make recommendations regarding items brought to the Commission in an effort to accomplish the goals set forth in Paragraph (C) of the mission statement.
 - b. Continue to carry out various activities during the year to achieve the goals and objectives set forth in the mission statement. Those activities may include reviewing, reporting, or making recommendations to Council or other Boards on matters outlined in Paragraphs (D) & (E) of the mission statement.
 - c. Specific goals and objectives for July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022 include:
 - i. Continue to evaluate the affordability of the services provided by Austin Water.
 - ii. Continue to monitor the financial status of Austin Water on a quarterly basis (through quarterly briefings and status reports).
 - iii. Reclaimed Water System: Evaluate the expansion of the reclaimed water system and rate structure, including any potential impacts on water and wastewater rates and water supplies. The reclaimed utility fund and rate structure should be vetted through the public and other boards and commissions.
 - iv. Review the overall capital improvement plan and how the plan meshes with the goals of the Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan, CodeNext, including areas within the CCN, Service Area, and annexation areas.
 - v. Monitor issues and service conditions related to municipal utility districts (MUDs), public improvement districts (PIDs),

and other special districts and wholesale customers through quarterly reports from Austin Water staff.

- vi. Monitor and encourage transparency and timely provision of information to the Commission and the public.
- vii. Continue to evaluate proposed contracts to ensure compliance with MBE/WBE goals and to ensure competitiveness in bidding.
- viii. Continue to monitor use of Austin Energy for meter reading and billing considering cost and customer service quality, and functional changes expected with implementation of the Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) system.
- ix. Review planning and preparation for harmful algal blooms (HABs) and the potential impact on water supply.