




MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Council Members

FROM: Greg Meszaros, Austin Water Director 

DATE: March 22, 2022

SUBJECT: Austin Water Response to Resolution No. 20220303-062

On March 3, 2022, Council approved Resolution No. 20220303-062 directing recommendations that (1) consider mitigating adverse utility bill impacts experienced by customers due to the February 2022 boil water event that could include a one-time bill credit and fee adjustments, and (2) provide alternative recommendations to reduce risk which may involve a one-time reallocation into Austin Water's operating budget or its 5 year Capital Improvement Plan in lieu of direct utility relief to customers.

In considering mitigating adverse utility bill impacts experienced by customers due to the February 2022 boil water event, Austin Water presented a goodwill one-time bill credit option at its Austin Water Oversight Committee on February 23, 2022. If authorized by City Council, this one-time bill credit would be applied to each account through the City's utility billing system. This one-time bill credit to each customer class, as detailed below, would total \$3,855,040.

- Residential \$10
- Multi-family CAP (Customer Assistance Program) \$10
- Multi-family \$75
- Commercial \$50

In lieu of direct utility relief to customers, Austin Water also evaluated alternative recommendations to reduce risk for all water treatment plants and identified the following opportunities to reallocate operating budget funds:

- Enhanced Core Staffing (12 FTEs, current year cost \$275K, FY2023 \$1.35M)
 - (2) Austin Water Operations and Maintenance Supervisors - providing overlapping Supervision to plant operators from day to night shift.
 - (5) Austin Water Operations and Maintenance Plant Technicians - establishing enhanced operator onsite 24-7 coverage.
 - (5) Austin Water Operations and Maintenance Plant Technicians - establishing enhanced onsite dayshift coverage for maintenance.
- Enhanced Support Staffing (4 FTEs, current year cost \$125K, FY2023 \$550K)
 - (1) Austin Water Process Engineer - establishing additional access to onsite engineering and regulatory support.

- (3) Certification Trainer Seniors – creating and administering plant-specific job aids, on the job training, and other resources for operators, co-located at major treatment facilities.
- Modernization Software for Standard Operating Procedures (current year cost \$350K, FY2023 \$650K)
 - Electronically map all standard operating processes to the procedural level.
 - Develops employee training materials with detailed process maps that walk employees through their daily tasks, electronically.
 - Creates roles, responsibilities, and ownership with enhanced audit trails.
 - Enhanced ability for employee knowledge management and knowledge transfer.

In consideration of the above, Austin Water recommends implementing the enhanced staffing and software modernization investments in lieu of the goodwill bill credit. These enhancements, at a combined current year and FY2023 cost of \$3.3M, will strengthen operational resiliency at our water plants and reduce the risk of future operational upsets.

Austin Water will bring this recommendation forward at the Austin Water Oversight Committee meeting on March 31, 2022, for discussion and possible action. Following the Austin Water Oversight Committee meeting, Austin Water can assist in the development of any needed Request for Council Action for City Council consideration in April and subsequent implementation.

For additional questions, please contact Greg Meszaros at greg.meszaros@austintexas.gov.

cc: Spencer Cronk, City Manager
CMO Executive Team