



City of Pflugerville

Minutes - Final

City Council

Monday, June 21, 2021

6:00 PM

100 East Main Street, Suite 500

Worksession

Public comment will be allowed in person at the Worksession scheduled to begin at 6:00 p.m. Written comments may also be submitted 2 hours in advance of the Worksession. To submit written comments, please email citysecretary@pflugervilletx.gov at least 2 hours in advance of the Worksession. Name and address must be included. Written comments are limited to 250 words.

1. Call to Order

Mayor Gonzales called the worksession to order at 6:00pm. Councilmembers Doug Weiss, Ceasar Ruiz, Rudy Metayer, and David Rogers were in attendance. Mayor Pro Tem Peña joined at 6:02pm. Councilmember Mike Heath joined at 6:10pm. City employees attending: Sereniah Breland, City Manager; Trey Fletcher, Deputy City Manager; James Hartshorn, Assistant City Manager; Amy Giannini, Assistant City Manager; Terri Toledo, Communications Director; Jason Smith, Acting Police Chief; Roxana Stevens, Assistant City Attorney; Karen Thompson, City Secretary; Trista Evans, Deputy City Secretary; Maggie Holman, Public Information Officer; Wade Maness, Videography Multimedia Specialist.

2. Public Comment

There were no requests for public comment.

3. Discuss Only

3A. [2021-0634](#) Discuss Fire and EMS Assessment Service Options for the City report prepared by AP Triton.

Ms. Breland provided an introduction regarding current Travis County ESD2 services and introduced AP Triton stating they will lay out five options and requested the council to narrow down the options. Richard Buchanan and Kurt Henke with AP Triton provided an introduction stating their purpose is to solve a problem and they came up with a number of viable options. Mr. Buchanan stated the presentation would give highlights of the report and provided an outline of the project and what AP Triton was contracted for which was to gather data to evaluate the statement that the District will deplete its reserves and begin to operate at a deficit unless an alternate revenue source is identified.

Mr. Buchanan provided background information on how the analysis was carried out stating Travis County ESD2 provided them an abundance of

information and were forthcoming with the data AP Triton needed. Discussion followed with the council about Service Demand data and the area maps. Mr. Buchanan and Mr. Henke provided information about the service demand in 2020 stating generally it went down because people did not want to go to hospitals, but in Pflugerville it did not. Mr. Buchanan stated that based on the information provided they are in the opinion that the district can provide the same service for another five to ten years. Mr. Henke discussed the possibility and difficulties of moving a fire station. Mr. Metayer asked if there was a population explosion how long would it take to get a station. Mr. Buchanan stated it depends on the needs of the area and there are variables, but an existing system has done it in three to six months.

Mr. Buchanan stated the focus of the report was on EMS, the fire service provided is exceptional, and based on the information provided about percentages of use the numbers look like it can be maintained for a number of years. Mr. Buchanan answered questions from the council for clarification. Mayor Gonzales asked about the use of emergency rooms rather than calling for EMS. Mr. Buchanan and Mr. Henke provided information and stated the advancement of tele-medicine may bring some changes. Mr. Buchanan provided information about staffing stating there may be better utilization of staff and they are not advocating getting rid of any staff. He discussed the theoretical relief factor calculation based on 2020 staff information which showed 17 staff overage to run neutral with the statement from the district being there is an intention to build a new station. Mayor Pro Tem Peña asked if it was an outlier to have this amount of overage. Mr. Henke stated it was. Mr. Rogers stated the intention is to build a new station but they already hired the people and there will be another 1.5 years until it is ready.

Mr. Buchanan answered questions from the council about staffing. He stated the ESD has their own paramedic school and the students are sent on the same calls so the number of calls and staffing is further diluted since the students are not included in the calculations. Mr. Henke stated that too many paramedics can be detrimental because no one gets enough chances to use their skills. Mr. Buchanan stated the facilities are great and they are well equipped. Mayor Pro Tem Peña asked if they are better equipped than other departments. Mr. Buchanan stated yes, they are doing great.

Mr. Buchanan provided a high level review of the financial analysis including the current reserves and the projected revenues of Travis County ESD2. Mr. Buchanan stated they prepared very well for COVID, but it did not hit as hard as they planned for and they did not recalculate. Discussion followed regarding the financial analysis. Mr. Rogers asked for clarification regarding tax payers subsidizing insurance companies. Mr. Henke stated that is a possibility, but that is a general issue and not just Travis County ESD2's issue. Discussion followed regarding third party billing companies and how the billing is handled.

Mr. Buchanan stated the response performance is meeting or exceeding all performance metrics. He provided information about projections on population and projected service demands. Mr. Buchanan introduced the options that do not add a tax burden to the community. Mr. Heath asked for how long. Mr. Buchanan stated ten years assuming there is not a major change. Mr. Buchanan stated the first option is to maintain the status quo which they believe could be accomplished without a subsidy if they reevaluated their

costs. Mr. Rogers asked if they cut off ambulance services to the city would their costs drop. Mr. Buchanan stated yes, but so would their revenues. Discussion followed regarding sales tax revenue. Mr. Buchanan stated another option is to pay the subsidy which would be about the same for ATCEMS to come in as crisis management. Mr. Buchanan stated an option was to join Travis County ESD17, but in order for the city to do that there would be a number of steps. Mr. Metayer asked for legal clarification on the process and Ms. Stevens provided information. Mayor Pro Tem Peña stated that could not happen in 90 days.

Mr. Buchanan stated another option is to bring in private ambulance services who did not want any subsidy and can put EMS here in 60 days, and it may require a cooperative effort between the private ambulances and some of the longer term options.

Mr. Buchanan stated an option is for city owned third service EMS which means the city would assume the role of ambulance provider and most municipalities do this as a phase. He stated another option is for a city fire and EMS department which requires a significant commitment of financial resources and would be a multi-year phased process. Mr. Henke stated this would not be a quick process.

Mr. Henke stated that the easy solution is to recalculate where the district is budget wise. He stated that if the EMS service is taken away it reduces that staff needed and this is a first class fire department and he does not want any cuts. Mr. Henke stated the finance people from the city and the district need to come to a commonality. Mr. Metayer stated this was all a policy discussion between two entities and he appreciated having a third party look at this to provide the information that missing. Mayor Pro Tem Peña stated there needs to be a bridge with service ending. Mr. Henke stated the bridge is the private ambulance service and it is about working smarter and having sustainability within the systems.

Mr. Rogers asked why the timeline to set up a municipal fire department is so long. Mr. Henke stated the big challenge is state legislation. Mr. Rogers asked if ESD2 does not need to tax any additional amount through any means in order to meet needs. Mr. Henke stated with the qualifier that no one knows what is going to come in, the data provided by ESD2 shows in their opinion that they can provide the same level of service without going to the tax payers for a subsidy. Ms. Breland provided information on the city's budgeted sales tax projections of \$11.35 million and current estimated projection of \$16 million. Mr. Heath stated he thinks the population projections are low. Mr. Henke stated that can be reevaluated. Mayor Pro Tem Peña asked for a recommendation. Mr. Henke stated in his opinion the city and the fire department need to talk to maintain the services and reevaluate the calculations. Discussion followed regarding legal questions of how to make the options work. Mr. Henke stated there are a number of options if the answer ends up being no. Mr. Weiss stated it looks like most of the solutions hurt the fire department and cost the city money. Mr. Henke stated it may hurt the fire department but may not cost the city. Mr. Heath stated for clarification, that any of the options other than working with the fire department hurts the fire department.

Discussion followed regarding revenues and staffing roles. Mr. Metayer stated he and Mr. Weiss met with some commissioners and they spoke of a willingness to work together. Mr. Weiss stated their intent was to meet with the

council and thinks it is a good opportunity now that they have the information. Mayor Pro Tem Peña stated the 90 day deadline is important. Mr. Henke recommended doing an individual analysis to review the financials. Discussion followed regarding the details of the analysis.

Mayor Gonzales stated it sounds like everyone wants to move toward a win-win solution and the council did not want to add additional tax burden to the residents. He stated there is no reason not to have a collaborative meeting with the ESD to come to a resolution. He stated ESD2 is nicely funded and have done a great job. Mr. Metayer stated no matter what the services will be there for the citizens. Mr. Rogers thanked AP Triton and the subcommittee for providing the information needed. Mr. Heath thanked ESD2 for being part of the fact finding and stated he looks forward to working towards a solution.

Discussion followed regarding setting a collaborative meeting the ESD2 and any required stakeholders. Mayor Gonzales asked Ms. Breland to work on setting that up soon. Mr. Weiss stated the council has been amicable to finding dates. Mayor Pro Tem Peña voiced concerns about continuing to ask the same question.

4. Adjourn

Mayor Gonzales adjourned the worksession at 8:34pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Trista Evans, Deputy City Secretary

Approved as _____ on July 13, 2021