

City of Gainesville

City Hall
200 East University Avenue
Gainesville, Florida 32601



Minutes - Draft

April 25, 2019

1:00 PM

Gainesville Regional Utilities Multi-Purpose Room

General Policy Committee

Mayor Lauren Poe (At Large)

Commissioner Helen Warren (At Large)

Commissioner Gail Johnson (At Large)

Commissioner Gigi Simmons (District 1)

Commissioner Harvey Ward (District 2)

Commissioner David Arreola (District 3)

Mayor-Commissioner Pro Tem Adrian Hayes-Santos (District 4)

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CALL TO ORDER - 1:03 PM

ROLL CALL

Present 7 - Mayor Poe, Commissioner Warren, Commissioner Ward, Commissioner Arreola, Commissioner Johnson, Commissioner Simmons, and Mayor-Commissioner Pro Tem Hayes-Santos

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Modification: When County Commissioner Hutchinson arrives, the Committee will discuss the Joint Water Policy Issue.

Nathan Skop spoke to the matter.

A motion was made by Mayor-Commissioner Pro Tem Hayes-Santos, seconded by Commissioner Ward, that this Matter be Adopted with Modifications. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Mayor Poe, Commissioner Ward, Commissioner Arreola, Commissioner Johnson, and Mayor-Commissioner Pro Tem Hayes-Santos

Absent: 2 - Commissioner Warren, and Commissioner Simmons

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[180976.](#) **General Policy Committee Minutes (B)**

RECOMMENDATION *The General Policy Committee approve the minutes of April 11, 2019.*

No Action Taken

DISCUSSION OF PENDING REFERRALS

[180448.](#) **Protecting our Creeks through Land Acquisition (NB)**

Motion: 1) Direct staff to look at the legal and planning process, along with a possible buffer; and 2) Work with a third party on a land trust. Mayor Poe suggested referring to the Joint Water Policy Committee.

Commissioner Warren arrived at 1:06 PM.

Mayor Poe gave introductory remarks.

County Commissioner Hutchinson spoke to the topic of managing creek systems. Explained models of land trusts as a potential mechanism to protect urban creeks. Mayor Poe and Commissioner Johnson responded.

Commissioner Simmons arrived at 1:18 PM.

Discussion about possibilities related to creating greenways to protect greenways via land trust. Mayor Poe spoke about the process of exploring this strategy.

Commissioner Ward spoke in support of creek management to address flooding during storms.

Mayor-Commissioner Pro Tem Hayes-Santos asked Commissioner Hutchinson about next steps to move forward. Commissioner Hutchinson responded. Commission should seek guidance from City Attorney and Planning Staff.

Mayor Poe commented that the Commission will need guidance from staff on policies and practices related to these efforts. Commissioner Warren spoke to the matter.

Commissioner Simmons asked a clarifying question about the matter being discussed. Mayor Poe responded.

Nathan Skop spoke to the matter.

RECOMMENDATION *The General Policy Committee hear an update from the Joint Water Policy Committee meeting on April 22nd, discuss and take action deemed necessary.*

A motion was made by Mayor-Commissioner Pro Tem Hayes-Santos, seconded by Commissioner Ward, that this Matter be Approved, as shown above. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Mayor Poe, Commissioner Warren, Commissioner Ward, Commissioner Arreola, Commissioner Johnson, Commissioner Simmons, and Mayor-Commissioner Pro Tem Hayes-Santos

180942.

Current Policies for Providing New GRU Utility Services (B)

Motion: Staff to bring back service area territory maps for water/wastewater, natural gas, electric; and telecommunications for the Commission to consider.

Tony Cunningham, GRU Wastewater Officer, gave opening remarks introducing the presentation on Current Policies for Providing New GRU services. Spoke about the water pledge. He presented about GRU water and wastewater service extension.

Commissioner Johnson asked a question about wastewater expansion in other cities. Mr. Cunningham responded.

Mayor-Commissioner Pro Tem Hayes-Santos asked a question about the Urban Cluster Line. Mr. Cunningham responded.

Gary Basinger gave a presentation on Electric and Natural Gas extension.

Mayor Poe and Commissioner Hayes-Santos asked questions. Mr. Basinger responded.

Commissioner Simmons asked a question about approaching property owners on the edge of GRU service territory. Commissioner Warren spoke to the matter.

Mayor-Commissioner Pro Tem Hayes-Santos asked a question about the area of gas service extension.

Commissioner Ward asked about extending gas lines in SE Gainesville. Mr. Basinger responded about plans for the SE area.

Mayor-Commissioner Pro Tem Hayes-Santos spoke in favor of the City Commission adopting service area maps to inform service expansion decision.

Commissioner Johnson asked a question about the gas service area map. Mr. Basinger responded. Ed Bielarski responded.

Commissioner Warren asked a question about the water service areas.

Mr. Cunningham asked clarification – asking for information about future service area. Mayor-Commissioner Pro Tem Hayes-Santos clarified asking about the Urban Cluster Line for water/wastewater; staff determine telecommunications and gas.

RECOMMENDATION General Policy Committee hear a presentation and have discussion with staff.

A motion was made by Mayor-Commissioner Pro Tem Hayes-Santos, seconded by Commissioner Ward, that this Matter be Approved, as shown above. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Mayor Poe, Commissioner Warren, Commissioner Ward, Commissioner Arreola, Commissioner Johnson, Commissioner Simmons, and Mayor-Commissioner Pro Tem Hayes-Santos

180943.

City Commission Rules (B)

Motion: 1) Direct staff to come back with language for requiring public comment cards to be submitted during public comment periods; 2) Staff to come back with specific language barring personal comments about residents, employees and individuals; 3) Staff to come back with language to allow general public comment to include items on the agenda or not, to allow the general comment periods to allow people to speak to items on the agenda (though citizens can stay and speak to the item when it comes up for discussion); 4) Move general public comment to the beginning of the meeting; and 5) Staff to look at a digital voting system.

Mayor-Commissioner Pro Tem Hayes-Santos introduced the item. Reviewed meeting rules from many other cities; observed that City of Gainesville agendas and operations are different from most. Most cities have fewer or more limited public comment opportunities. Proposes making changes to meeting management rules to improve efficiency, modeling rule changes on other municipalities.

Commissioner Arreola thanked Mayor-Commissioner Pro Tem Hayes-Santos for conducting the research. Proposed that Commissioners review how they operate during meetings, be better stewards of time during Member Comment (possibly time limits). Spoke in favor of enforcing existing provisions in the City Commission Rules. Not in favor of curbing public comment rules at the risk of chilling disagreement from the public.

Commissioner Johnson responded to Commissioner Arreola. Wants Commission to consider the goals of this discussion. Concerned about limiting time for discussion, incivility in discourse, personal attacks. Does not support limiting public comment, more interested in addressing the tenor of City business discussions. Supports making meetings more efficient.

Commissioner Simmons spoke in support of public comment cards, letting citizens comment before items are discussed by the members.

Commissioner Ward commented that the Commission should not seek efficiency over democratic participation. Supports the idea of comment cards and addressing the lack of civility and personal attacks on citizens during meetings.

Commissioner Warren spoke to the matter. Agreed with the Commission needing enough time for discussion. Supports reviewing the existing Commission rules on meeting management; Clerk's office can support orienting new Commissioners. Supports comment cards.

Commissioner Johnson proposed a trial period for any new procedures. Requested clarity on the role of the "Sergeant of Arms" during meetings.

Omichele Gainey, Clerk of Commission responded: The Sergeant of Arms is City Manager for purpose of Commission not directing staff. When an issue arises, the Mayor directs the City Manager to direct staff according to protocol.

Mayor Poe clarified that the City Manager is empowered by the City Commission Rules to fulfill the role.

Commissioner Johnson in favor of comment cards, visual vote system, adding language about attacking staff or Commissioners. Wants to address escalating discourse during meetings while maintaining free speech rights.

Mayor Poe supports cards for Public Comment; rotating votes. Spoke to using Legistar platform to accept public comment. Supports idea of allowing citizens to speak about agenda items during Public Comment period. Does not want to regulate the content of speech; wants guidance from Attorney to understand political speech (not threatening or malicious).

Lisa Bennett, Senior Attorney spoke to the matter of public speech. Would like time to return with more guidance on rules and measures to avoid uncivil discourse and protect decorum to include in policies.

Mayor Poe commented about wanting meetings in which all participants feel welcome, maintain civility, atmosphere of respect. Some items in rules he has not been enforcing, but will adapt to do so if Commission desires.

Lisa Bennett clarified that the agenda does not have to be adopted before public comment.

Mayor-Commissioner Pro Tem Hayes-Santos spoke about public comment email (Miami-Dade example). Spoke in favor of a six-month trial. Asked about adopting both consent and regular agendas in the same motion. Commented that more research is needed before moving forward; would rather staff look more deeply to bring back recommendations of best practices.

Commissioner Simmons asked about including digital voting. Commissioner Arreola responded about potential of incurring a fiscal cost, unsure about budget.

Ms. Gainey confirmed that Legistar currently offers visual voting functionality; will work

with Broadcasting on integrating into Auditorium.

Commissioner Ward clarified the desire to have visible voting to register for audience to view.

Commissioner Johnson suggested leaving language less specific on personal attacks. Mayor responded that legal will come back with guidance on the language.

Mayor-Commissioner Pro Tem Hayes-Santos asked to add that staff research best practices on agenda management to find additional changes to be made all at once.

Commissioner Arreola clarified that people should be able to speak during general comment and to a specific item. Mayor Poe clarified that people could speak twice, but not on the same item. Commissioner Arreola reiterated that comment cards will be necessary. Commented that Commission should not ask staff to look into this, just move forward.

Mayor Poe disagreed - wants Legal and Clerk's staff to look into the rules before moving forward, make changes altogether.

Ms. Gainey clarified that the City already has comment cards. Asked Commission for directions on parameters for comment cards – are they to be used for signing up to comment, or content for specific comments.

Mayor-Commissioner Pro Tem Hayes-Santos asked staff to review the comment cards, bring back options to consider which cards and recommend how they can be used.

Commissioner Arreola confirmed that he would want citizens to list the topic of item.

Commissioner Ward would like to offer the option of neighborhood or physical address to follow up with citizens. Mentioned other governments ask if individuals are representing a group.

Commissioner Simmons asked a question about the comment card.

Commissioner Warren spoke to the matter on how many people need to speak.

Commissioner Ward spoke to the matter of time permitted for public comment.

Mayor Poe commented that there needs to be a decision about the point at which the Clerk will stop accepting cards (if it goes over the 30 minute time).

Mayor-Commissioner Pro Tem Hayes-Santos commented about speakers announcing themselves as paid lobbyists.

Jeff Larson, Nathan Skop, Ray Washington and Christine Larsen spoke to the matter.

Mayor Poe asked the Clerk to bring item back to Commission when information from staff is ready.

RECOMMENDATION

The General Policy discuss current rules and take action deemed necessary.

A motion was made by Commissioner Arreola, seconded by Commissioner Warren, that this Matter be Approved, as shown above. The motion carried by

the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Mayor Poe, Commissioner Warren, Commissioner Ward, Commissioner Arreola, Commissioner Johnson, Commissioner Simmons, and Mayor-Commissioner Pro Tem Hayes-Santos

[180964.](#)

General Policy Committee Referral List (B)

Commissioner Simmons requested to add an update about after school programs to the next GPC agenda.

Mayor Poe responded that Commissioner Simmons should refer the item at the May 2nd City Commission meeting to the GPC referral list after May.

Dan Hoffman confirmed that staff will be ready with an update when the items is added to an agenda.

RECOMMENDATION

The General Policy Committee discuss the referral list.

PUBLIC COMMENT

MEMBER COMMENT

NEXT MEETING DATE

ADJOURNMENT - 3:41 PM