

City of Gainesville

*City Hall
200 East University Avenue
Gainesville, Florida 32601*



Minutes

Thursday, September 12, 2013

5:00 PM

City Hall Roberta Lisle Kline Conference Room

Regional Utilities Committee

*Commissioner Todd Chase, Chair
Mayor Ed Braddy, Member
Commissioner Lauren Poe, Member*

Persons with disabilities who require assistance to participate in this meeting are requested to notify the Equal Opportunity Department at 334-5051 or call the TDD phone line at 334-2069 at least two business days in advance.

CALL TO ORDER**ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

The agenda was adopted as drafted.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES**130301. Regional Utilities Committee Meeting Minutes for August 8, 2013 (B)**

Attachments: [2013.09.12 RUC 8-8-13 Meeting Minutes](#)

RECOMMENDATION *Approve minutes as drafted*

The minutes were approved as drafted.

CURRENT ACTION ITEMS**080183. Coal Aquisition Policy (B)**

Attachments: [Item #080183 Back Up for 1-23-12.pdf](#)
[Item #080183 Laws & Regulations Applicable to Mountain Top Mining RUC N](#)
[RUC Item 080183 Citizen Submittal 8-16-11.pdf](#)
[RUC Agenda Back-Up-Item 080183.pdf](#)
[#080183 Coal Aquisition Policy 2-19-13](#)
[080183_proposed ordinance_20130912](#)
[080183_illinois coal program_20130912](#)
[080183_coal inventory_091213](#)

RECOMMENDATION *Hear an update from staff on GRU's coal acquisition policy.*

Staff gave an update on GRU's coal acquisition practices. John Stanton reported that our test burn with a 50/50 mix of lower quality Illinois Basin and Central Appalachian coal went very well. However, he said that Central Appalachian coal prices have been declining and we have a low cost transportation contract for Central Appalachian coal, so those economic factors make burning Illinois Basin coal less economical. He said that we will continue to test and will have 50 thousand tons of test coal delivered in the second quarter of FY14.

Mr. Stanton went on to say that since January 2013, 65-70% of our purchased coal was deep-mined, not mountain top removal. He said at present we have no active coal contracts and will probably do spot purchases in approximately April of FY14.

Jason Fults gave a presentation on the effects of mountain top removal mining on behalf of Gainesville Loves Mountains. He submitted a draft ordinance regulating the city's use of Mountain Top Removal coal and said that he hopes the city will adopt it. He also wants the City Commission to make a formal

statement against the practice of mountain top removal.

Citizens Wendell Porter, Kendra Vincent, Whitney Much, Ed Brown, Rob Brinkman, Donald Shepherd, Nathan Skop, Kevin Veatch, Mark Venzke, Mr. Dixon, Ernesto Martinez, Jeremiah Tattersall, Jim Konish, Armando Grundy, Garrett Quinlivan, and Nancy Darrin spoke on the matter.

Commissioner Poe said he thinks we can have a policy in place by April FY14 when we need to purchase again that would dictate what type of coal we'll purchase. He thinks the added cost of purchasing Illinois Basin coal is worth it when you consider the environmental cost of mountain top removal and that we as a city should make a moral choice.

Mayor Braddy and Commissioner Chase said they would not support anything that adds to the cost of utilities in Gainesville.

Commissioner Poe said he would work with the GM and Gainesville Loves Mountains to come up with a workable ordinance and present it to the full commission.

The item will remain in committee until the full commission hears a presentation from Commissioner Poe.

120883.

Late Fees and Utility Terminations (B)

Attachments: [2013.09.12 Item 120883 - Attach 1](#)
 [2013.09.12 Item 120883 - Attach 2](#)
 [Item 120883 Late Fees-Utility Terminations 20131217](#)

This item was heard after item 130321.

RECOMMENDATION *Receive a report from staff on GRU's policies regarding late fees, payments and termination policies.*

Staff gave a presentation on GRU's policies regarding utility deposits, late fees and cut-offs.

Bill Shepherd explained the billing cycle from the time a meter is read until we go into the field to possibly shut someone's service. He said that because we bill for services in arrears, a customer can use up to 62 days of service before they are turned off for being delinquent on one month's (30 days) service due to the process of assessing fees and sending notices.

Commissioner Poe asked if we had explored the possibility of sending electronic reminders (text, email) to people who are late in addition to a letter. Kathy Viehe said that we had been meeting with various vendors and the next step is working such a project into our IT department's heavy workload.

Mr. Shepherd said that we average about 2000 disconnects per month for non-payment.

Mr. Shepherd explained payment options available to customers and also our policies regarding late fees and service disconnects.

The committee and several members of the public asked questions about our processes and policies throughout the presentation. The committee asked for the item to remain in committee for further discussion at a future meeting.

130321.

Removal of Items from Committee

This item was heard before item 120883.

RECOMMENDATION *Staff recommends removal of the above items from committee.*

The committee discussed whether to remove three items from the referral list. Commissioner Poe made a motion to recommend to the full commission removal of items number 100383 and 120181. It was seconded by Mayor Braddy and passed unanimously. They agreed to retain item #110783 in committee for further discussion.

MEMBER COMMENT

CITIZEN COMMENT

NEXT MEETING DATE

October 10, 2013

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 pm.