

City of Gainesville

City Hall
200 East University Avenue
Gainesville, Florida 32601



Meeting Agenda - Final

November 30, 2015

5:00 PM

City Hall Auditorium

General Policy Committee

Mayor Ed Braddy (At Large)
Commissioner Harvey Budd (At Large)
Commissioner Helen Warren (At Large)
Commissioner Charles Goston (District 1)
Commissioner Todd Chase (District 2)
Mayor-Commissioner Pro Tem Craig Carter (District 3)
Commissioner Randy Wells (District 4)

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

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

AGENDA STATEMENT

"Citizens are encouraged to participate in City of Gainesville meetings. In general, speakers will be limited to 3 (three) minutes per agenda item. Additional time may be granted by the Mayor or by the City Commission as directed. The City of Gainesville encourages civility in public discourse and requests that speakers limit their comments to specific motions and direct their comments to the Chair. Signs or Props are not permitted in the meeting room. Citizens are encouraged to provide comments in writing to the Clerk of the Commission before meetings and/or during meetings for inclusion into the public record. Citizens may also provide input to individual commissioners via office visits, phone calls, letters and e-Mail, that will become public record. In some instances, i.e., Quasi-Judicial Hearings, these particular contacts may be prohibited.

ROLL CALL

[150448.](#)

Habitat/City Partnership Potential (B)

This item is a request for the City Commission to hear a presentation from Blake Hakimian, a senior Political Science major at the University of Florida (UF), on how UF students can participate and give back to the community through a community partnership and volunteers program.

Explanation: Blake Hakimian, a senior at UF, would like to work with the City of Gainesville in identifying and coordinating volunteer opportunities for students on community projects. At the City Commission meeting of October 15, Mr. Hakimian reported about a Habitat for Humanity project with which UF Students participated. At UF, Mr. Hakimian has over 500 Volunteers that can assist with projects. Mr. Hakimian would like to create a partnership that allows students to contribute to other meaningful projects within the City (See Attachment A - proposal from Mr. Hakimian).

The City of Gainesville has many opportunities for students to participate and learn about City Government. Each year, City departments (City Manager's Office, Public Works, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs, Administrative Services, Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA), Regional Transit System, Gainesville Fire Rescue, Gainesville Police Department, Gainesville Regional Utilities, Equal Employment Office, and other offices) accept interns from various fields of study to work and learn about city government (see Attachment B -- Memo from Paul Folkers to the Mayor and the City Commission on Internship Opportunities with the City). Many of these students are hired for part-time jobs during the summer, and others are hired for permanent placement when such opportunities and funding are available for

students. In addition, city employees participate in mentoring opportunities with the Alachua County School Board through the EEO.

The City's Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs Department (PRCA) routinely recruits volunteers to work on special projects like the Downtown Festival and Art Show, the Great Invader Raider Rally, and the Hoggetowne Medieval Faire, litter cleanup projects, and other projects throughout the year. The City of Gainesville frequently works with specific schools at UF to integrate studies with actual projects. The CRA is currently working with Habitat for Humanity on its painting program in the Eastside Redevelopment District, for which it solicits volunteers to assist homeowners in painting and upgrading their homes. Similar CRA/Habitat for Humanity volunteer opportunities are available in the Fifth Avenue/Pleasant Street and Downtown Redevelopment Districts too.

City Staff will work with the Mr. Hakimian to coordinate volunteer opportunities with city departments and community partners on projects within the City.

Fiscal Note: The cost to implement this community partnership is mainly in-kind services. The staff liaison will work with the departments and divisions to ensure that proper supervision is available to the students participating in these community projects.

RECOMMENDATION

The City Commission direct the City Manager to identify a staff liaison to work with Mr. Blake Hakimian to identify community projects and volunteer opportunities for students at the University of Florida as well as other educational institutions in our area.

Legislative History

10/15/15 City Commission Referred to the General Policy Committee

[150448A Hakimian proposal 20151130.pdf](#)

[150448B CCOM Memo 20151130.pdf](#)

[150465.](#)

The State of Homelessness in Gainesville - Alachua County and the impact of GRACE Marketplace and Dignity Village on Homeless Services (B)

This is a request for the City Commission to hear and discuss an update on local homeless services and begin planning future steps toward ending homelessness.

Explanation: The Gainesville City Commission requested that a meeting of the whole Commission be scheduled to discuss the status of homelessness in Gainesville - Alachua County and the impact of the GRACE Marketplace and Dignity Village on the reduction of homelessness.

In January 2015, the Alachua County Coalition for the Homeless and Hungry (ACCHH) and its volunteers conducted a point-in-time survey, which identified 1,479 people as experiencing homelessness in Gainesville - Alachua County. This survey reflects those individuals and families who identify themselves as homeless in our community; it does not reflect the current estimates in our community because the number of homeless individuals and families may change daily, weekly, and monthly.

According to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), there are over 564,708 people experiencing homelessness in the United States on any given night. In Florida, it is estimated that there are 35,964 people living on the street or in an emergency shelter. This information was gathered from the 28 Continuum of Care (COC) organizations across the State of Florida. The Alachua County Coalition for the Homeless and Hungry is the lead agency for the Continuum of Care in our region. The Continuum of Care in North Central Florida is represented by five counties, which include Gilchrist, Levy, Bradford, Putnam, and Alachua County.

HUD further reports that the fastest growing homeless population is families. This is true for Florida. For the 2013-14 school year, Florida Public Schools identified 71,446 students as homeless. This includes families that have lost their housing and are staying with friends and relatives. However, in Gainesville - Alachua County, there is a need to address homeless single men, single women, couples, and children.

The causes of homelessness are varied and complicated; however, some root causes of homelessness are poverty, domestic violence, and substance abuse. Other factors are mental illness, discrimination, and immigrant status, according to the US Department of Health and Human Services.

Of all the factors, poverty is the single most significant cause of homelessness. An individual or family experiencing poverty is often unable to pay for necessities, such as housing, food, childcare, or health care and, as such, is only an accident, illness, or paycheck away from becoming homeless.

The Gainesville - Alachua County Community has made strides in trying to address homelessness in the community. Here are some actions, steps, and projects that have been implemented:

**Establishment of the GRACE Marketplace homeless center;*

**Enhanced services to homeless veterans;*

**Enhanced services for victims of domestic violence;*

**Better coordination of mental health services within our jail, with veterans, and with residents at GRACE and Dignity Village;*

**Better management of the Dignity Village camping area;*

**More Rapid Rehousing Programs are being implemented;*

**Better coordinated food drives to reduce the number of hungry within the community;*

**Better public awareness and education about the Alachua County School Board's Summer Food Program; and*

**Scattered home sites within the City and the County.*

Despite improvements to our homeless services and Emergency Preventive Services Model, Gainesville - Alachua County still needs a clear, deliberate, and comprehensive strategy to reduce or eliminate homelessness. The Empowerment Center Oversight Advisory Board Citizens Committee recently held a homeless summit to address the needs of GRACE Marketplace and Dignity Village. A summary of the Homeless Summit and its recommendations are outlined in Attachment B.

The National Alliance to End Homelessness recommended ten components necessary to end or reduce homelessness in a community. The Ten components cover strategies for success: prevention, re-housing options, access to housing and services, and efficient use of data. The Components are:

Plan - Devise a plan of action. The Gainesville and Alachua County Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness is ten years old now and needs to be revised to address the current aspects of homelessness. Revision of the plan needs to include participation by representatives from all groups within the local homeless and homeless services community. There may be a need to consider what groups are being funded and what services might now be obsolete, as well as how to better use our resources to address homeless issues.

Data - It is imperative to fully understand the homeless and have better coordination among all service providers and to track homeless services. With homelessness, assembling accurate data can be difficult, as the homeless move from area to area. The local COC conducts an annual point-in-time survey and has a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), which is required by HUD. HMIS collects data about those who interact with homeless assistance providers and the information can be helpful in understanding the homeless population's trends and needs.

Emergency Prevention - The most economical and efficient way to reduce or end homelessness is to prevent it from happening in the first place. This may require service providers to change their program guidelines and allow residents to access emergency funds more than

one or two times per year to reduce the likelihood of an individual or family becoming homeless.

System Prevention: Many people who fall into homelessness do so after release from state-run institutions, including jails and the foster care system. Still others come to homelessness from mental health programs and other medical care facilities. By creating a clear path to housing from these institutions in the form of case management, access to services, and housing assistance programs, we can reduce the role that state-run institutions play in creating homelessness.

Outreach - An important role to end homelessness is outreach to people experiencing homelessness. A key component to this outreach is the ability to connect the homeless population to housing and services. When considering outreach efforts, it is important to understand that many people living on the streets exhibit mental illness, substance addiction, and other negative behavior patterns. As such, it is important to consider low-demand housing that does not mandate sobriety or treatment.

Case Management Services - It is imperative to have case managers who can help homeless persons and families, or those at risk of becoming homeless, to navigate the social services system as well as follow up with individuals and families regarding their case management plan. The Oversight Advisory Board Citizen Committee recommended that case management services be provided to all homeless people.

Shorten Homelessness - A successful homeless assistance program works when it ends homelessness but also if it minimizes the length of stay in shelter care and reduces repeated homeless episodes. In order to do this, assistance programs must align resources to ensure that families and individuals have access to necessary services so they may achieve independence as quickly as possible. This often requires immediate access to housing, home-based case management, and incentives embedded into the homeless assistance system to promote these outcomes.

Rapid Rehousing/or Housing First - Navigating the housing market, especially on behalf of clients with lower incomes and high needs, is a difficult task. A successful homeless assistance program has housing staff that can help with just that. Housing locators search local housing markets and build relationships with landlords. Successful program components include incentives to landlords to rent to homeless households, creative uses of vouchers and subsidies to help homeless individuals and families afford their rental units, and links to resources to help clients maintain their housing.

Access to Services - Services are actually more accessible than they sound, as many of them already exist in the community. By and large, homeless individuals can access mainstream programs including Temporary Assistance to the Needy (TANF), Supplemental Social

Security Income (SSI), Medicaid, and other existing federal assistance programs. Connecting families and individuals who are exiting homelessness to these programs is critical to ensuring their independence.

Permanent Housing - At its root, homelessness is the result of the inability to afford and maintain housing. Any plan to end homelessness must incorporate investment in creating affordable housing. This includes supportive housing, which is permanent housing coupled with supportive services. This is often used for the chronically homeless population; that is, people experiencing long-term or repeated homelessness that also have mental health and/or physical disabilities.

Income: In order to maintain housing, people exiting homelessness must have income. Cash assistance programs are available through federal and state governments, and career-based employment services can help formerly homeless people build the skills necessary to increase their income. Maintain Services including the Workforce Investment Act, should be used for purpose.

The United States Department of Justice has recently issued an opinion on laws that criminalize camping and sleeping outdoors in public places. In addition, the National Law Center has recently issued a report on the criminalization of the homeless in cities (see Attachment C - No Safe Place). HUD has requested that cities and counties that receive federal funds determine how they are using the money to assist in the decriminalization of camping and public sleeping in their community. The City of Gainesville is not at risk of being in non-compliance with HUD since the City uses federal and local dollars to address homeless issues, including funding homeless services at GRACE Marketplace and Dignity Village. However, it is still essential to address the immediate needs of the homeless.

HUD has recently approved the technical assistance request for the Gainesville CoC to more fully address the CoC's needs, to improve the performance of grantees that support the CoC and to contribute to GRACE Marketplace's efforts to end chronic homelessness. Within the next couple of months, the City, the County and the CoC will work with HUD to develop an action plan to strengthen partnerships and identify resources to better address homelessness in Gainesville-Alachua County.

Fiscal Note: The City of Gainesville and Alachua County Board of County Commissioners have agreed to fund homeless services in the amount of \$780,793.50 at the Empowerment Center for FY 2016. The City has agreed to fund two Police officers in the amount of \$160,000 as well as a full time Project Manager in the amount of \$66,000 for Dignity Village. Other in-kind services are being provided to support homeless services through the City and the County, which are not identified in the Fiscal Note.

RECOMMENDATION

The City Commission discuss homeless services provided in Gainesville - Alachua County and

provide policy direction to Staff.

Legislative History

10/15/15 City Commission Referred to the General Policy Committee

[150465A Point in Time survey 20151130.pdf](#)

[150465B Citizens Committee Rpt 20151130 1.pdf](#)

[150465C No Safe Place 20151130.pdf](#)

[150465D HUD report 20151130.pdf](#)

[150465E Council on Homelessness Rpt 20151130.pdf](#)

150512.

UTILITY GOVERNANCE ALTERNATIVES (B)

Explanation: At its November 5, 2015 meeting, the City Commission adopted, on first reading, an ordinance to create a utility advisory board. In addition, the Commission continued its discussion of: 1) placing a binding referendum question before the voters (by adopting a proposed charter amendment ordinance that creates a utility governance board with relevant expertise appointed by the City Commission); or 2) placing a non-binding referendum question before the voters (by adoption of a resolution) to gauge voter interest in the City Commission proposing a charter amendment to create a utility governance board with relevant expertise appointed by the City Commission.

At the November 5, 2015 City Commission meeting, the City Commission directed the City Attorney's Office to work with Commissioner Budd to draft a non-binding referendum question and place it on the November 19th City Commission meeting agenda. The City Attorney's Office discussed the matter with Commissioner Budd and provided him with the following draft question:

"Should the City prepare and submit a charter amendment to the city electors on the spring 2017 city election ballot which amendment, if approved, would remove policy-making authority and management oversight over the City's electric, water, wastewater, natural gas and telecommunication utilities from the elected City Commission and grant that policy-making authority and management oversight to a citizen board with relevant expertise appointed by the City Commission?"

In addition, at the November 5, 2015 meeting, the City Commission requested the City Attorney's Office provide each member of the Commission with a draft ordinance that would place a binding referendum question before the voters. As requested, the City Attorney's Office provided a draft charter amendment ordinance via email on Monday, November 9th and that draft is included in the back-up to this agenda item.

As drafted, the charter amendment would add a new section 4.04 to the City Charter. Section 4.04 is divided into ten (10) paragraphs that

address the following matters:

Paragraphs 1-3 create and establish the membership of the board; Paragraphs 4 and 5 define the responsibilities and duties of the board; Paragraph 6 identifies the responsibilities and authority that the city commission retains over the utilities; Paragraph 7 defines the responsibilities and duties of the general manager of utilities and Paragraphs 8, 9, and 10 reaffirm that the utilities remain a city asset; that utility employees remain city employees; and that the utility board will have all rights and obligations with respect to existing utility obligations, including contracts and bonds, as the City Commission had.

The Regional Utilities Committee (RUC) met on Thursday, November 12, 2015 and discussed the draft charter amendment (Legistar No. 150524 titled GRU Governance - Draft Charter Amendment.) At the meeting, the RUC suggested revisions as follows:

Change the name of the governing body from Board of Trustees to Board of Directors.

Remove paragraph 4(b) regarding renewable energy.

Remove the word compensation from paragraph 6(b) and replace it with reimbursement for training and out of pocket expenses for travel to training and professional meetings associated with utility business.

Change the authority to employ and set the compensation for the general manager from solely the board of directors to the city commission with agreement from the board of directors. This would require a change to paragraph 4(v), paragraph 6(l), and paragraph 7(a).

Change paragraph 5(e) to reflect that the current general fund transfer formula provided by Resolution No. 130852 will continue through September 30, 2019 at which time the city commission will establish a new general fund transfer amount by ordinance.

RECOMMENDATION

The City Commission: 1) discuss the draft charter amendment ordinance and revisions suggested by the Regional Utilities Committee; 2) discuss the draft non-binding referendum language; and 3) decide whether to take any further action with respect to utility governance alternatives.

Legislative History

11/5/15	City Commission	Discussed
11/19/15	City Commission	Heard

[150512 Draft Charter Amendment 20151119.pdf](#)

ADJOURNMENT

