

# **City of Gainesville**

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



## **Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday, May 13, 2010**

**3:30 PM**

**GRU ADMINISTRATION BUILDING MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM**

## **Regional Utilities Committee**

*Commissioner Lauren Poe, Chair  
Mayor Pegeen Hanrahan, Member  
Commissioner Craig Lowe, 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

## APPROVAL OF MINUTES

### 090913.

#### **Regional Utilities Committee Meeting Minutes for February 11, 2010 (B)**

*Commissioner Lowe moved and Mayor Hanrahan seconded that the minutes for February 11, 2010 be approved as recommended.*

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

*The Regional Utilities Committee approve the meeting minutes for February 11, 2010 as circulated.*

**This matter was Approved as Recommended. The motion carried.**

**Roll Call:** Present: Lauren Poe, Craig Lowe and Pegeen Hanrahan

RUC Meeting Minutes for Feb 11 2010.pdf

## CURRENT ACTION ITEMS

### 090588.

#### **Dedicated Funding Source to Assist Non-Profit Agencies (NB)**

*David Richardson, Assistant General Manager for Water/Wastewater Systems gave a presentation to the RUC regarding issues surrounding wastewater services to the Cotton Club and how that led to the larger discussion of special consideration for non-profit groups. The presentation included a general description of GRU's extension policies and suggestions on funding options.*

*Commissioner Lowe offered one potential solution of allowing organizations to pay the connection fee out over time along with their regular utility bill.*

*David Richardson responded that is an option and one that had been used on a limited basis. He explained that before the ConnectFree program, people on wells and septic tanks were allowed to pay over a period of 10 years with a small interest payment included.*

*Commissioner Lowe asked if the Cotton Club had been on a wastewater line and if it would qualify for the ConnectFree program. Staff responded that the Club had been on central water and septic tank but the ConnectFree program is limited to residential.*

*Mayor Hanrahan expressed the concern that the RUC consider establishing some criteria in determining who should receive assistance like the size of the non-profit's operating budget or if there is paid staff. She also stated that she did lean on the side of working with groups to pay over time and also that it would be a good use of CRA*

*funds.*

*Commissioner Henry commented that the City had made decisions to fund organizations that serve a public need and that where the Cotton Club is located they would definitely serve a public need from the standpoint of bringing art and culture to the neighborhood as well as being a catalyst for revitalization and redevelopment. Commissioner Henry further stated that the CRA has already funded quite a bit towards the Cotton Club and he didn't want to always look to the CRA as a funding mechanism. He doesn't totally disagree with the pay over time program. Commissioner Henry asked how one entity could put rate pressure on the wastewater system.*

*David Richardson responded that it will depend on how broad the non-profit and public purpose is defined and on how large the pool of organizations becomes that would get reduced fees or no cost extensions.*

*Commissioner Poe commented that he could see the potential where this would have a significant impact on all GRU customers. He felt that the Mayor brought up some very important points regarding differences between non-profits. Commissioner Poe further stated he did not have a problem adding non-profits and businesses to the ConnectFree program. He asked that if over time there would be less demand for the ConnectFree program and more in the east than in the west.*

*David Richardson responded that there are still pockets of septic tanks in the west areas of the City such as University Heights.*

*Mayor Hanrahan raised the concern about inequities where some people pay for sewer connections in their mortgage while others might get a grant from the City and the need for some distinguishing way of making decisions between one user and another.*

*There was discussion about the new state law requiring inspections of septic systems on a periodic basis and whether a property owner can be compelled to switch from septic to City wastewater service.*

*Commissioner Poe stated that he was hearing lots of different view points on some things but felt a consensus to find some way to help lower income entities. Commissioner Poe asked for staff to consider options for assisting organizations outside of the CRA area and that the payment plan is not a viable option.*

*Mayor Hanrahan suggested that we may want to look at the entity paying at least 1/3 and CRA paying 1/3 and ConnectFree paying 1/3 and asked for Mr. Lyons from the CRA to share his perspective.*

*Anthony Lyons confirmed that the CRA had given grants to the Cotton Club.*

*Mayor Hanrahan suggested that Utility and CRA staff be allowed to come back at a future meeting with recommendations based on the discussion by the RUC.*

*Commissioner Poe commented that he agreed and he felt the main points are to try*

*and establish a threshold that would target the people most in need of this service, make the ConnectFree program available to non-residential as well as residential and see what the effects will be on the ratepayers. Staff should also look at total cost per year if there is a cap with X amount of number dollars set aside each year.*

*This was approved by the full RUC.*

**RECOMMENDATION**     *The Regional Utilities Committee receive a presentation from GRU Staff on the range of options and impacts related to providing financial assistance to non-profit agencies that provide a public benefit and take appropriate action.*

**Discussed**

**Roll Call:**

## **MEMBER COMMENT**

## **CITIZEN COMMENT**

### **090914.     Regional Utilities Committee Outstanding Referral Status Report (B)**

*Commissioner Poe requested that staff be prepared to discuss outstanding referral item #080927 (Natural Gas Fueling Station) at the next meeting. It was suggested that electric vehicle charging stations be added to the discussion.*

**RECOMMENDATION**     *The Regional Utilities Committee review the Outstanding Referral Status Report dated April 8, 2010.*

**Discussed**

RUC Outstanding Referrals status report May 13 2010.doc

## **NEXT MEETING DATE**

## **ADJOURNMENT**

*The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.*