



Legislation Text

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Utility Assistance Update (NB)

This item requests the City Commission to hear an update regarding the development of a Utility Assistance Program.

On July 19, 2021, the City Commission adopted Resolution #210125, which states that the Commission will consider increasing electric and wastewater rates for Fiscal Years 2022 through 2027; and, the Commission will consider developing and funding utility assistance programs to mitigate the financial impacts to those most negatively impacted by those rate increases.

On February 24, 2015, Gainesville Regional Utilities (GRU) executed a Memorandum of Understanding with local non-profit agencies Catholic Charities, Gainesville Community Ministry, and The Salvation Army to manage a program called Project Share. The purpose of that program is to provide financial assistance to GRU customers who qualify for emergency support due to a financial hardship. GRU uses multiple funding sources, including voluntary contributions from its customers and employees, to support Project Share. The agencies use 100% of the funds for the financial assistance program.

Staff is currently researching options to determine how to fund and manage a similar Utility Assistance Program, including exploring potential partnerships with third-party providers. Additionally, a program budget and funding source will have to be identified to implement the program.

This item is connected to Goal 1: Equitable Community in the City's Strategic Plan, and to Goal 3: A Great Place to Live and Experience in the City's Strategic Plan.

There is no fiscal impact at this time. A future funding source will need to be determined if a program is authorized.

The City Commission receive a presentation on a Utility Assistance Program, discuss and provide direction.