



To: Honorable Mayor and City Commission

From: Tony Cunningham, Interim General Manager

Date: 11/07/22

Re: FY 2022 Interim General Update to the City Commission

On January 29, 2022, the City Commission directed me to serve in the role of interim General Manager of GRU. After serving our community for more than 20 years in various positions and levels of responsibility (including many years on the Leadership Team), it has been an honor and privilege to serve eight months of FY'23. My primary focus while in this role has been to deliver essential utility services to our community so it can continue to operate and thrive. This includes supporting the staff and infrastructure necessary to carry on our more than 100-year history of delivering efficient, safe, reliable, environmentally responsible utilities while actively enhancing the quality of life in our community.

To accomplish this mission, I adjusted our leadership team to improve collaboration and communication throughout the utility. These adjustments were the beginning of an organizational shift aimed at improving collaboration within GRU, the broader city, the City Commission, community boards and the community at large. During this time, we have made major strides toward not only continuing the high level of service we provide, but improving and finding efficiencies in these collaborative efforts.

You will find below highlights of the incredible work GRU's staff has accomplished under each of the objectives set for me either by the City Commission or myself as the interim General Manager.

Objective	Actions/Outcomes
Ensure GRU continues to <b>provide safe, reliable utility services</b> in an environmentally responsible and equitable manner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Delivered electric, gas, water, wastewater and telecommunications services</b> without major interruptions or significant environmental impacts.</li> <li>✓ Established an <b>operational plan and budget</b> for FY23 consistent with the City Commission direction from FY22.</li> <li>✓ GRU is commissioning an <b>Integrated Resource Plan (IRP)</b> for its electric utility to learn what is required to meet the City Commission's goal of net-zero community-wide greenhouse gas emissions by 2045. As part of the IRP, GRU will be conducting community engagement to better understand stakeholder priorities for future power needs. The Office of Sustainability solicited responses and evaluated bids and is close to signing a contract with a vendor to perform community engagement.</li> </ul>

- ✓ **Chief Sustainability Officer and Department of Sustainability and Resiliency established.** The CSO position has been created filled with an acting officer. We are in the process of establishing the rest of the sustainability team. The Sustainability Office is focused on establishing a sustainable path forward for the utility including power generation, energy transmission, natural gas, water/wastewater and telecommunications. Community engagement is critical to developing and implementing these plans and the Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) will be the primary public engagement model.
- ✓ Responded to the **critical level of the fuel adjustment** while simultaneously performing outreach to keep customers apprised of increases and educating them how to manage usage and lower bills. Partnered with outside agencies to provide relief funding to customers struggling to pay bills during this unprecedented time.
- ✓ Currently evaluating **GRUCom** systems including (1) initiated negotiations for possible sale of the Trunk Radio System, (2) finalized external evaluation of Residential Broadband services and (3) continue work to determine the best path forward with line of business.
- ✓ Infusion of \$1.9 million of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds into our **LEEP<sup>plus</sup> program**, which allows GRU to enhance an energy rehabilitation program that has been successful since its inception in 2007, providing energy efficiency upgrades to more than 1,800 homes. Established and executed a plan to expand the LEEP<sup>plus</sup> program to address rental properties, increase investment per home and the number of homes improved over the next three years. GRU's residential efficiency experts rolled the expanded program out on May 2, 2022, after making the necessary updates. We completed 132 LEEP homes in FY22, 396 residential and 68 commercial surveys.
- ✓ **Utility Debt Forgiveness** – Utilized ARPA funds to pay \$24,158 to 32 households to address installment payment plans related to COVID hardships.
- ✓ **Improved communication with the UAB** and developed a work plan to focus and prioritize topics for the coming year. Began work on updating and improving the UAB energy policy. GRU staff and the UAB are collaborating to improve the plan.
- ✓ **Expanded outreach efforts** to outperform previous efforts to win the **National Mayor's Challenge for Water Conservation**, placing second overall and first in the SEC
- ✓ Increased the number of **GRU in the Neighborhood** engagements and participated in two City Services Fairs.

	<p><b>City Commission Approvals</b> to continue providing efficient core utility services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Selection of Progressive Design-Build Firm for the Groundwater Recharge Wetland Project</b> to provide additional groundwater recharge and a public park.</li> <li>✓ <b>Extension of Solar Photovoltaic PPA</b> and continue to work with Origis to provide 50 MW of solar.</li> <li>✓ Electric Transmission Service <b>Contract with City of Alachua.</b></li> <li>✓ <b>Multiple Financial transactions</b> to reduce costs and risks and continue on the path to long-term financial stability.</li> <li>✓ Transfer of <b>management of the Boulware Springs</b> facility to Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs to improve this City asset for the community.</li> <li>✓ <b>Updated streetlight and rental lighting program</b> to better reflect cost of services as well as <b>transferring ownership of public works lights</b> to better improve efficiencies City-wide in operation and maintenance of infrastructure.</li> <li>✓ <b>Approved the GRU budget for FY2023</b> which provides for continued ability to operate, maintain and improve the supply of electricity, water, natural gas, wastewater and telecommunications to our community.</li> <li>✓ <b>Letter of Support for GRU's Sweetwater Branch Stabilization Project</b></li> </ul>
<p>Improve <b>communication and collaboration.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Modified GRU's organizational structure</b>, which has yielded consistent communication regarding operational priorities throughout the organization and increased collaboration across departments.</li> <li>✓ <b>Organizational culture</b> is being addressed in a variety of ways based on recommendations made as a result of the culture audit. GRU staff members are being certified as conflict resolution trainers. GRU will participate in executive coaching and enhanced leadership development training.</li> <li>✓ Added structure to weekly GRU leadership team meetings to make them more inclusive and productive.</li> <li>✓ Resumed quarterly managers and supervisors meetings with a new focus on addressing and improving employee morale and utility culture.</li> <li>✓ Began providing frequent communications to the City Commission, including one-page fact sheets summarizing important initiatives.</li> </ul>
<p>Ensure GRU is actively engaging in <b>One City</b> efforts to support shared services and improve internal service delivery across Charters</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ All six charters worked collaboratively to <b>align the City Commission's Strategic Plan</b> with each charter's area of responsibility. The six charter officers worked together and with the City Commission to ensure stabilization of core operations and internal processes. Four critically important areas were identified as top priorities: GG financial services operations, technology (Workday)/infrastructure, vacancies city-wide, and the City's organizational culture. GRU staff is led the stabilization of GG Finance until it was ready to hand over to newly hired Finance Director and is leading the stabilization of Workday, GG's Finance and Human Capital ERP. Both require(d) significant staff resources.</li> </ul>

- ✓ **GRU's Budget, Finance and Accounting Team** provided a significant level of assistance with stabilization of GG's Finance Department, which fell under critical review by both the State Auditor General and Internal Audit offices. Under the leadership of our CFO, Claudia Rasnick, root problems in the areas of deficiency were identified and a work plan put in place to address the issues identified. Foundational work was completed. This effort doubled the work of several senior level GRU employees for approximately six months. **GRU's team led the recovery efforts**, including completing financial statements, federal and state reports, bank reconciliations, and **filling two key positions** for the department, the Finance Director and Controller.
- ✓ GRU is providing significant staff resources for **Workday Stabilization** including GRU IT expertise leading the stabilization effort and steering committee members to address insufficient requirements gathering, lack of business processes, configuration deficiencies, insufficient staff training and ongoing Workday readiness for both the GG Finance and H.R. functionality of Workday.
- ✓ Expanded Cyber Security training and outreach across the City.
- ✓ Yvette Carter developed the **One City One Community Relations Plan** that outlines the City's approach to community outreach, engagement, partnerships, investments and advocacy, modeling it on her GRU community relations work. This includes the Community F.I.R.S.T. program, a program that prioritizes a Facilitative, Innovative, Restorative, Supportive, and Timely approach to neighborhood services.
- ✓ Held **weekly standing meetings** with the City Manager to increase communication, encourage relationship-building, align decision-making and streamline service delivery city-wide.
- ✓ Partnered with the Office of Equity & Inclusion to hand over **GRU's Inclusion work** that started two years ago.
- ✓ Aligned internal **citywide communications** by consolidating "InsideGNV" and "GRU Daily" to create "The Daily Brief."
- ✓ Combined two separate offices within General Government and GRU to **establish the Office of Government Affairs and Community Relations**, reporting to the City Manager with dotted line responsibility to the GRU General Manager.
  - GACR emphasizes city-wide community impact and serves as a consultant to each department with a particular focus on community engagement and outreach.
  - GACR builds and maintains relationships with GRU customers by employing equitable and inclusive community engagement.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Human Resources Department reports to the City Manager with a dotted line responsibility to the GRU General Manager, emphasizing citywide internal service delivery. A <b>strong partnership was reestablished between H. R. and GRU</b>, with GRU providing H. R. assistance from the previous H. R. Director, Cheryl McBride, as needed and where requested. A Service Level Agreement was developed and presented to the H. R. Director for agreement.</li> <li>✓ <b>GRU IT has improved lines of communication</b> with General Government departments to gather information, share expertise and where appropriate, support GG's technology needs. GG's IT team moved into GRU facilities to be in close proximity to GRU IT to partner more closely. A Service Level Agreement was developed and presented to Ms. Curry for agreement.</li> <li>✓ Working alongside the City Manager, developing plan to align I.T. services across the entire City under the Chief Information Officer, Walter Banks.</li> <li>✓ In partnership with Ms. Curry, Interim City Manager, we <b>continue to evaluate opportunities to streamline areas of shared services</b> to promote efficiency throughout the organization.</li> </ul>
<p>Ensure <b>AMI and CIS</b> technology projects stay on track for successful implementations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Installed a <b>meter farm</b> at the Eastside Operations Center to test and verify Advanced Metering Infrastructure as we prepare for deployment of AMI meters over the next several years.</li> <li>✓ Established <b>steering committees</b> for both AMI and projects continue to oversee progress and steer major decisions.</li> <li>✓ Agreed to utilize VXField as <b>CIS work management system</b>.</li> <li>✓ Reassigned <b>project champion</b> role for AMI to Walt Banks, CIO.</li> <li>✓ The AMI solution validation area (SVA) has all meters (2,584 electric meters, 1,044 water meters, and 596 gas modules) installed and the meters are 100% operational and communicating.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Manage high vacancy rates</b> at GRU.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Partnered with H. R. to initiate job audits and interim market studies to address areas of <b>high turnover</b>.</li> <li>✓ <b>Dedicated staff to augment Workday processes</b> with manual processes to ensure position control accurately reflects vacancies, and to ensure accurate entry and use of system.</li> <li>✓ Partnered with H. R. to identify critical vacancies and ensure <b>active recruitment plans</b> are underway.</li> </ul>



I successfully stepped into the interim general manager role, set expectations, and strengthened relationships. I remain steadfast in my dedication to curating a team that leverages talents and skillsets, aligning day-to-day operations to provide safe, reliable utility services and continue advancing towards a collaborative organization responsive to the directives of the City Commission and needs of our customers and partners.

Ongoing areas of focus include:

1. Continue leadership, management and oversight of GRU operations.
2. Continue focus on collaborating as One City to strengthen and identify operations and strengthen core functions: financial services operations, Workday operational issues, vacancies throughout GRU, and the overall organizational culture.
3. Implement the Fiscal Year 2023 Operating Plan and Budget in a fiscally sound manner.
4. Fully implement the office of Sustainability and Resiliency.
5. Continue to evaluate GRUCom systems and provide sound recommendations for a sustainable path forward.
6. Develop a comprehensive IRP for the next 10 years.
7. Follow-through and implementation of City Commission directives as approved.

I continue to look forward to the challenges that lie ahead.

Sincerely,

*Tony Cunningham*

Tony Cunningham  
Interim General Manager