



**City Commission Workshop**  
**MINUTES**

**February 27, 2023, 1:00 p.m.**  
**City Hall Auditorium**  
**200 East University Avenue**  
**Gainesville, FL 32601**

Members Present: Mayor Ward, Commissioner Book, Commissioner Chestnut,  
Mayor Pro Tempore Duncan-Walker, Commissioner Eastman,  
Commissioner Saco, Commissioner Willits

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**A. CALL TO ORDER - 1:00 PM**

**B. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

**Moved by** Commissioner Chestnut

**Seconded by** Commissioner Book

Aye (7): Mayor Ward, Commissioner Book, Commissioner Chestnut, Mayor Pro  
Tempore Duncan-Walker, Commissioner Eastman, Commissioner Saco, and  
Commissioner Willits

Approved (7 to 0)

**C. BUSINESS DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**1. 2023-221 Outcome of JLAC Meeting and City Commission Next Steps  
(B)**

**Commissioner Chestnut:**

- Direct City Attorney to repeal Ordinance #2022-758 re: City  
Commission Salary Increases.
- Ask Charter Officers for budget cuts and return with cuts in 4  
weeks.

- Implement a hiring freeze immediately.
- Hold off on the execution of the Origis contract and return it to the City Commission for additional discussion.
- Have the City Manager and General Manager review duplication of services and consolidation with GRU under GG, perhaps bring in a third party to facilitate.
- Wants state representatives to assist the city by speaking with UF about becoming a GRU customer or to set up a PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes).
- End GFT and explore bonding opportunities and once all other options are exhausted, consider an ad-valorem increase after all other options have been exhausted.

**Mayor-Commissioner Pro Tem Duncan-Walker:**

- Assess the net-zero by 2045 and bring back the costs.
- Consider a fee on car rentals (via airport).
- Consider selling Ironwood.
- Eliminate other smaller things like CCOM travel budget and CCOM meals.

**Commissioner Book:**

- Impacts of reducing GFT incrementally, in terms of commitment of continuation of service and impact to debt levels.
- Freezing open positions (across all six charters).
- Look at city-wide decrement packages for non-essential services.
- Explore state assistance in reviewing our contract/budget savings and GFT.

**Commissioner Eastman:**

- Happy to explore efficiencies and seems to be the general tenor of staff as well through things like a zero-based budget as mentioned by the City Manager.

- Doesn't disagree with any other suggestions/ideas, wants to see all options and what brings us to a good point of sustainability that matches what bond holders and residents expect us to do.

**Commissioner Willits:**

- Wants to continue to explore options but wants to keep GRU as a public utility.

**Commissioner Saco:**

- Agrees, GRU should remain a public utility.
- Needs bold and creative actions.
- Sunset at-large seats after current term, returning to a five-member commission, since the two at-large seats haven't traditionally been part of the Commission.
- Look at other ways we can partner with UF, to incorporate the main campus into our service area.

**Mayor Ward:**

- Loves idea about consolidation between GRU and GG to ensure efficiencies both for services and financially.
- About 17+ acres in the Power District that could be a potential source of revenue that currently sits fallow.
- Loves idea of PILOT from UF/Santa Fe College, keep in mind, that's not up to the city but the state.
- Need to move forward on concepts for sponsorships for things that have historically been paid from taxes.
- Perhaps, eliminating the GFT and a plan for what happens when that's not there.

**Members of the Public:**

- Explore a consolidated city/county government.
- If we want UF to use our services, ask them to dedicate energy crop research to reach goal of net zero by 2045. Paul Stevers is an engineer in Canada, with a company called ThinkRenewables.com to assist. Get carbon credits we already have and sell them.

- Consider cutting upper management salaries/positions.
- Shift the city to a 4-day work week.
- Look at appointments at the top that can be eliminated.
- CWA representative (Jennifer Powell) will be sending a survey to members for cost-cutting ideas and then forwarding that to the City Commission.

State Representative Mike Caruso spoke to the item.

Cynthia Curry, City Manager spoke to the item.

Anthony Cunningham, General Manager for Utilities spoke to the item.

Joseph Dixon, Fire Chief spoke to the item.

Public Comment: Robert Mounts, Don Fields, Debbie Martinez, Tom Cunilio, Nathan Skop, Kale Blount, Donald Shepherd, Chuck Ross, Jennifer Powell, Joe Little, Tyler Forest, Bobby Mermer

**Recommendation:** The City Commission discuss and take action deemed necessary.

Discussed

**D. MEMBER COMMENT**

**E. ADJOURNMENT - 3:22 PM**

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Omichele D. Nattiel-Williams, IIMC-CMC, City Clerk