

CITY OF GAINESVILLE CHARTER AMENDMENT 1

Shall the Charter of the City of Gainesville be amended to create the Gainesville Regional Utilities Authority as the governing board of Gainesville Regional Utilities (GRU),...?

This referendum contains a simplistic summary of a complex law (HB 759) passed by the Florida legislature which requires this referendum. GRU is a publicly owned local utility, providing electricity, natural gas, water, wastewater, and telecommunications services. Currently, it is governed by the Gainesville City Commission, guided by the Utility Advisory Board (UAB), and managed by GRU's General Manager. If the referendum measure passes, GRU will be governed and managed by an autonomous board called the Authority, whose five members would be appointed by the Gainesville City Commission but would otherwise be unaccountable to the City and its citizens.

If you vote YES

- Governance of Gainesville's locally owned utility will be transferred from the City Commission to an Authority, with powers determined by state statute.
- Except for the ability to nominate Authority members to the City Commission, Gainesville's citizens will have no designated control of GRU or power to influence Authority decisions.
- The annual general fund transfer from GRU to the City, which provides approximately 38% of the City's operating budget, may be reduced 3% every year.
- The City Commission will appoint the five-member Authority but otherwise will have no control over the Authority or its actions, including decisions regarding future utility rates, utility facilities management and disposal of assets, general fund transfers, salaries of the City's GRU employees, or other GRU budgetary matters.
- Any future changes in GRU governance or the Authority's powers will require state legislative action or court action.

If you vote NO

- Governance of GRU will remain with the Gainesville City Commission with input from the Utility Advisory Board, as set forth in the City Charter.
- Gainesville's citizens will continue to have influence over their locally owned utility through citizen action and the voting booth.
- The annual general fund transfer, which provides substantial support for City services, will more likely remain at present stable levels, which will facilitate the City's long-term budget planning and policy development.
- Changes to GRU or the Utility Advisory Board will not require state legislative action or a court challenge.
- Home rule (the right of a city to self-governance, not in conflict with state law) will be preserved.

Supporters

Gainesville Chamber of Commerce
Rep. Chuck Clemons
Senator Keith Perry

Opponents

Rep. Clovis Watson
NAACP Environmental & Climate Justice Committee
Suwannee St. Johns Sierra Club
AFL-CIO
League of Women Voters of Alachua County