

The GRU Authority Must Be Much More Than Merely “Better” Than the Gainesville City Commission

HB1645 is the product of many years of hardwork by many different people across party lines. The opposition was ferocious and vicious. The effort to reform GRU governance dates back to at least 2010.

HB1645 is a complex piece of legislation. It is unprecedented – as is the current financial condition of our once proud GRU utility. The intent behind HB1645 is to get politics out of GRU governance, and end the abuse of GRU as a political ATM. The covenants in the GRU Revenue Bonds that prohibit the massive GRU SLA Losses are now codified in the City Charter. The legislative mandates are harsh, mandatory and are not to be slow jammed. Not once has the GRU “Authority” been asked to be briefed on their mandate. Few will ever understand HB1645 and what it took to get this legislation enacted. Effectuation is proving to be just as difficult as enactment.

A disgraced cult of personalities responsible for mismanaging and looting GRU have largely stymied full and timely implementation of HB1645 through a blizzard of nuisance lawsuits, bogus referendums, and misinformation. They operate in machine-like precision to protect THEIR ATM. The tentacles of this cult that has completely controlled our local politics for 20 years reach everywhere – except where the power over GRU now resides.

Of nine (9) appointees from the Governor’s office so far:

1. One declined to serve upon discovering that since she was not a GRU electric customer thus was ineligible to serve. Kudos to her!
2. Everyone at one point resigned simultaneously due to a possibility that there may be too many county residents.

3. Two appointees obviously lack the requisite expertise and are blissfully ignorant about the matters at hand. They only serve as Ed Bielarski's cheerleaders.
4. Two have tirelessly worked to thwart timely and full implementation of HB1645 for unknown reasons. One stayed on for months after their term had expired, leaving yet another indelible black mark on their reputation.
5. One, and only one, has taken their oath seriously and expended a lot of their own time, energy, and even their own resources to fully and quickly stop the hemorrhaging of GRU ratepayer funds that continues to threaten the long term solvency of GRU. He faced open and especially behind-the-scenes interference and harassment, some of it vicious, from one of his colleagues and especially the comrades.

The caliber of the appointments, except for two, is extremely disappointing.

HB1645 is neither about vindicating Ed Bielarski, nor the Governor personally. Despite the little understood HB1645 repeal of Ed Bielarski's former powers under Sec. 3.06 of the City's Charter, Ed Bielarski continues to now operate like a self-recruited czar as a do nothing "Authority" provides no direction whatsoever. Ed Bielarski is supposed to be HR and little more absent a formal delegation of additional powers by the Authority that has not taken place.

As the also self-appointed de facto GRU Public Information Officer. Ed Bielarski advances the same self-serving narrative that did not get him elected Mayor, lost him the first GRU Governance referendum big time, and that will surely lose the second referendum in another landslide as well. His book appears to be little more than a white wash of

dubious behavior. Ed Bielarski is used to working in a barn that has not been shoveled out in a long time thus everything passes his “smell test”.

Mr. Bielarski knowingly marches GRU and us all toward his post-retirement financial cliff by:

1. Cancelling the Integrated Resource Plan (IRP), firing the architect, and replacing it with fairy dust. His claim that our aging, obsolete, worn out, uneconomic, dirty “arsenal” of electric power plants can run forever is completely unsupported by any credible evidence. GRU has repeatedly failed to secure “firm availability” on a transmission line connected to unlimited economic electricity from other utilities thus remains locked into Ed’s “arsenal” of uneconomic plants.
2. Mismanaging the HB1645 legal quagmire. Ed Bielarski has duplicated his feeble effort to mitigate the biomass contract in which he entered into a sham mediation that was abandoned. Ed Beilarski paid way too much for the biomass plant, then accounted for it in a dubious manner, yet now claims the plant was worth it and is a great asset. This is all completely false and further renders GRU Financial Statements misleading.
3. Denying the very existence of a vast array of dozens of huge SLA losses with various entities. This has resulted in even more falsified GRU Financial Statements that have already been discovered to be as such by State Auditors – and others. The GRU CFO has admitted this publicly at the GRU Authority meeting on 12/3/2023, and has been questioned in the Governor’s office. FDLE has had boxes of GRU internal documents for many months. Falsified “Full Cost Allocation Reports” and illegal directives from the Mayor are very much already on the State radar screen. The Governor and his CFO did not visit the City of

Gainesville first (out of 411 municipalities, 67 counties and the Community Development Districts) by happenstance. The stable outlook for GRU bond ratings are dependent on GRU Financial Statements with ongoing intentional, serious material misstatements and omissions.

For those few people in a position of immediate authority to hold Ed Bielarski, their absolute subordinate, accountable and who fail to do so – shame on you. Your own reputations and the very survival of GRU is at risk. Ignorance is no excuse.