

Commissioner Bobby Banks does not support the idea to do a water rate study.

Commissioner, here is a quick tutorial on why we need the study:

O.C.G.A. § 36-70-24(2)(A) says; "The (Service Delivery) strategy (aka: HB 489) shall provide that water or sewer fees charged to customers located outside the geographic boundaries of a service provider shall not be arbitrarily higher than the fees charged to customers receiving such service which are located within the geographic boundaries of the service provider."

So in other words, this is like taxation without representation. While the service is provided by the city of Gainesville, we do not get to vote for any of the people that set the rates. This is a protection clause.

O.C.G.A. § 36-70-24(2)(B) says; "If a governing authority (Hall County) disputes the reasonableness of water and sewer rate differentials imposed within its jurisdiction by another governing authority (City of Gainesville), that disputing governing authority (Hall County) may hold a public hearing for the purpose of reviewing the rate differential. Following the preparation of a rate study by a qualified engineer, the governing authority (Hall County) may challenge the arbitrary rate differentials on behalf of its residents in a court of competent jurisdiction. Prior to such challenge, the dispute shall be submitted to some form of alternative dispute resolution;"

So there are two things that need to be done: 1- a rate study needs to be done by a qualified engineer and 2- a public hearing must be conducted. Or you can just take the city of Gainesville at their word that the rates are not arbitrary.

I do know that the service fee is totally arbitrary. It cannot cost exactly twice as much to read my meter and mail a bill to Flowery Branch. I don't think stamps cost more by the mile.