

**Collin Roehner**

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**From:** Collin Roehner on behalf of Records Clerk  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 12, 2017 8:57 AM  
**To:** 'Bill Shallcross'  
**Subject:** RE: Docket 160101-WS commentary  
**Attachments:** PSC commentary.pdf

Good morning Mr. Shallcross,

We will be placing your comments below in consumer correspondence in Docket No. 160101-WS and forwarding your comments to the Office of Consumer Assistance and Outreach.

Sincerely,

Collin D. Roehner  
Commission Deputy Clerk I  
Office of Commission Clerk  
Florida Public Service Commission  
2540 Shumard Oak Blvd.  
Tallahassee, Florida, 32301  
(850) 413-7123

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**From:** Bill Shallcross [<mailto:wshallcross@cfl.rr.com>]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 11, 2017 5:55 PM  
**To:** Office of Commissioner Polmann; Office of Commissioner Brisé; Office of Commissioner Patronis; Office Of Commissioner Graham; Office of Commissioner Brown; Cindy Muir  
**Cc:** Records Clerk; Walter Trierweiler; 'Sayler, Erik'; [lconstantine@seminolecountyfl.gov](mailto:lconstantine@seminolecountyfl.gov); [jmariano@pascocountyfl.net](mailto:jmariano@pascocountyfl.net); [mfriedman@ff-attorneys.com](mailto:mfriedman@ff-attorneys.com); [John.Stover@corix.com](mailto:John.Stover@corix.com)  
**Subject:** Docket 160101-WS commentary

## Collin Roehner

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**From:** Bill Shallcross <wshallcross@cfl.rr.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 11, 2017 6:03 PM  
**To:** Office of Commissioner Polmann; Office of Commissioner Brisé; Office of Commissioner Patronis; Office Of Commissioner Graham; Office of Commissioner Brown; Cindy Muir  
**Cc:** Records Clerk; Walter Trierweiler; 'Sayler, Erik'; lconstantine@seminolecountyfl.gov; jmariano@pascocountyfl.net; mfriedman@ff-attorneys.com; John.Stover@corix.com  
**Subject:** RE: Docket 160101-WS commentary

I apologize. I forgot to add two things to this email – my signature, and to sign using alter ego – Don Quixote.

William Shallcross  
551 Carlisle Ave.  
Altamonte Springs, Florida 32714  
[wshallcross@cfl.rr.com](mailto:wshallcross@cfl.rr.com)  
(M) 321-356-6400

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**From:** Bill Shallcross [<mailto:wshallcross@cfl.rr.com>]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 11, 2017 5:55 PM  
**To:** 'Commissioner.Polmann@psc.state.fl.us' <[Commissioner.Polmann@psc.state.fl.us](mailto:Commissioner.Polmann@psc.state.fl.us)>; 'Commissioner.Brise@psc.state.fl.us' <[Commissioner.Brise@psc.state.fl.us](mailto:Commissioner.Brise@psc.state.fl.us)>; 'Commissioner.Patronis@psc.state.fl.us' <[Commissioner.Patronis@psc.state.fl.us](mailto:Commissioner.Patronis@psc.state.fl.us)>; 'Commissioner.Graham@psc.state.fl.us' <[Commissioner.Graham@psc.state.fl.us](mailto:Commissioner.Graham@psc.state.fl.us)>; 'Commissioner.Brown@psc.state.fl.us' <[Commissioner.Brown@psc.state.fl.us](mailto:Commissioner.Brown@psc.state.fl.us)>; 'cmuir@psc.state.fl.us' <[cmuir@psc.state.fl.us](mailto:cmuir@psc.state.fl.us)>  
**Cc:** 'clerk@psc.state.fl.us' <[clerk@psc.state.fl.us](mailto:clerk@psc.state.fl.us)>; 'wtrierwe@psc.state.fl.us' <[wtrierwe@psc.state.fl.us](mailto:wtrierwe@psc.state.fl.us)>; 'Sayler, Erik' <[SAYLER.ERIK@leg.state.fl.us](mailto:SAYLER.ERIK@leg.state.fl.us)>; 'lconstantine@seminolecountyfl.gov' <[lconstantine@seminolecountyfl.gov](mailto:lconstantine@seminolecountyfl.gov)>; 'jmariano@pascocountyfl.net' <[jmariano@pascocountyfl.net](mailto:jmariano@pascocountyfl.net)>; 'mfriedman@ff-attorneys.com' <[mfriedman@ff-attorneys.com](mailto:mfriedman@ff-attorneys.com)>; 'John.Stover@corix.com' <[John.Stover@corix.com](mailto:John.Stover@corix.com)>  
**Subject:** Docket 160101-WS commentary

## **“Florida's Public Service Commission: What we do, why we exist” – or, “In the name of Transparency: Here’s how the PSC invites transparency”**

**My biggest take-away from this matter at hand is that private equity firms have no business running essential public utilities.**

I am pretty worked up regarding Cindy Muir’s shoot from the lip rebuttal to my opinion – both recently published in the Orlando Sentinel, though much tempered (in print) from her original submittal to that newspaper. Primarily: “... I [Muir] am writing to correct several factual inaccuracies in Mr. William Shallcross’ opinion piece ...” was deleted. But I guess that’s my comeuppance for poking a behemoth in the eye.

Unfortunately for Ms. Muir, she is unaware that the Sentinel is a poor forum for informing – including public policy or consumers - as a further evidenced by the fact that no one posted a comment regarding my opinion; not even the usual assorted nut-jobs. Which reinforces what I am about to convey.

I’m not worked up about the rebuttal; rather I am worked up in that I have failed to educate the PSC on its long-standing, dated and ineffective outreach protocols, though perhaps prescribed by law.

Also unfortunately, I was trying – hoping really - to disengage from this current rate request process believing that I had said all I had to say, and having *targeted* the folks I wanted to motivate, with my Sentinel opinion playing a very minor role. Using the Sentinel as a forum is analogous to using buckshot – *hoping* to hit something - when a laser is much more effective.

The following is a reiteration of some of the information dissemination enhancements I have proffered, as well as amplifications.

**Mailing densely worded notifications – obtuse is not transparency - to parties – read customers – that read like legal motions doesn’t work. These mailings either go directly to trash/recycling or are not understood, if even opened. Furthermore, sending bilingual notifications – as I previously suggested - is probably a moot point – re above – but at least that protocol change would convey consideration to many of the Spanish-language consumers. And not to do so in this day and age is remiss questioning just how informing the PSC desires to be.**

UIF’s Altamonte franchise area is solidly working class – you can read between the lines here - with a smattering of retirees, and does not have a POA/HOA, which limits directly informing residents on local issues. Unfortunately – or as President-elect Trump would tweet – SAD!

On the request at hand, I think my evidence is more than anecdotal as I had 750 door hanger notifications printed and over several days/hours went door to door distributing them. During that time I took the opportunity to speak with as many residents as possible. Next to none were aware of the rate request from UIF’s November 4, 2016 mailing.

**And here I ask Ms. Muir to review the record to see how many people contacted PSC as a result of that mailing – zero? – as opposed to *after* my labor intensive effort around Thanksgiving and into December. Answer: all of them and universally opposing any rate hike.**

Next up is that the request seems to be a shell game/Three-Card Monte. I have spent hours immersing myself in the process with a huge learning curve. Early on I believed that the rates requested were ludicrously high, which would be whittled back to what would seem like – to the PSC and the public – a reasonable request - a common negotiating ploy. But all is relative.

And the game – gamed? – seems to change daily – but only to people closely following it. UIF's November 4, 2016 notification made no mention – at all – of a consolidated rate request and still conveyed the (then) ludicrously high requested rates, now significantly reduced for the Altamonte franchise. Which, as an important aside, hamstringing the OPC as they cannot address this important change in a divide and conquer strategy as it will create, if approved, winners and losers in this battle across UIF's customer base.

I will mention here – despite the best efforts of the OPC – opponents of the rate request have zero financial resources to muster as opposed to UIF's seemingly deep pockets and its professional, highly effective consultants.

Also, please note I am not a UIF customer – my landlord is. The only reason I was awakened to the request was through the very shabby way he was treated in a ridiculously defended \$500 billing dispute between him and UIF to which UIF brought in its lead rate request counsel (Coenson Friedman, P.A) as well as its parent company's (Corix's) general counsel! More on the way UIF treats its customer to follow at a later date.

No one can reasonably expect consumers – who don't follow this request regularly and closely – to understand what's going on. Which segues to my next points.

This is not a 1.2 million customer-affected request. This request affects only about 60,000 customers around the state of Florida. As such it is not a sexy topic for any single media to report on, try as I did to get them interested. Hence my Hail Mary opinion written for the Sentinel.

The recently published RATE CASE OVERVIEW (RCO) format is a vast improvement over prior notifications, but still has much room for improvement. I dare staff to ask me for elaboration.<sup>1</sup>

**Foremost I ask: why a 35-page, two-sided document? You can bet most people – if they opened it - thought - as the kid's say today – WTF? - and it went right to the trash. It should be tailored for recipients in each franchise to be easily and readily comprehended.**

For a lot of folks it must look like an (SAT) test, maybe an LSAT. It required any reader – ones who are only interested in their own utility bill – to go through two charts that could be better presented - and

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<sup>1</sup> I loathe doing anything in a vacuum. Has the PSC's Office of Consumer Assistance and Outreach ever solicited feedback/constructive criticism from recipients on the format of the various notifications, and instead of its one size fits all philosophy?

make comparisons - then thumb through the document to find the detailed – and confusing – back up data for their franchise that even I struggled to interpret. Now I ask: who's going to do this?

Well apparently (only) 10 15 customers in the Longwood franchise who just woke up. Though are they lucky to have lived blissfully ignorant during the first 8 innings and only have to understand the much changed request in the bottom half of the 9<sup>th</sup>?

Furthermore – and I'm too lazy to verify –these Longwood folks may be more educated generally (than within the Altamonte franchise) and can comprehend the RCO, at least the gist. Let's see how many contacts are generated from the same mailing in my community.

And now here's where the whole thing is a charade, rendering every point – above – moot.

**“During every rate case, the Commission visits as many central locations in the utility's service area as feasibly possible to conduct service hearings and learn first-hand from customers about the utility's performance.”** Cindy Muir in the Orlando Sentinel

Please!

I have participated in a zillion public ~~meetings~~ hearings in my life, and they are all essentially the same. An application is made; negotiated with staff – usually to a recommendation for approval – and brought to a public hearing.

If folks oppose it – usually for emotional rather than factual reasons, poorly articulated – they *may* show up, reluctantly taking PTO from work. And as PSC general counsel told me, ‘we know what they're going to say.’ I always feel sorry for these folks because no one *really* cares what they have to say, and decisions are based on completely different reasons, and often times political.

What largely matters is how many people show up – and in large part when through organized, unified opposition such as your seeing in New Port Richey. In these instances I have seen commissions crater, or disturbingly, table or send back to staff “to address opposition” concerns, thereby requiring the public to take more PTO to attend a future hearing. And guess what? There's attrition.

In summary, such hearings are following a legal requirement that often fails (to serve) the public.

Furthermore, the UIF request isn't like a Wal-Mart going in across the street from your home; rather it's a relatively minor-league issue - though not to them - that nowhere near garners as much public interest/opposition. Except for advocates like me.

The PSC is missing the forest for the trees as my **biggest take-away from this matter at hand is that private equity firms have no business running essential public utilities** – and while I've never heard of anyone complaining about the quality of their electricity, seems to be lots of complaints about the quality of UIF's water, who “consider customer service excellence one of our core competencies.”

In closing, if PSC staff (and by extension the Commission) believe, as set forth in Ms. Muir's articulated defense of the system, that public hearings and the way are noticed, are the optimal protocol – then the problem is clear.