

AI Summary:

North Florida Water Utility Authority Trust and Transparency Issues

The **North Florida Water Utility Authority (NFWUA)** continues with ongoing problems with **trust and transparency**. The Authority, made up of two county commissioners from Suwannee and Columbia counties plus one citizen member, is responsible for roughly a \$1.77 mil operating budget (much of it funded by direct county subsidies that the Authority euphemistically calls "grants").

Key transparency failures highlighted include:

- Meetings are **not recorded** for the public.
- Board minutes are not posted on the Authority's website.
- Agendas and supporting materials are routinely posted at the last minute (in this case, the Monday, May 18 meeting agenda was not available on the website until late Saturday afternoon).
- The Authority has **no bylaws**, leaving the Executive Director without clear rules for agenda deadlines, supporting documentation, or day-to-day operations.

After the May 18 meeting, Executive Director **Shannon Roberts** told County Manager David Kraus he planned to prepare the next year's budget, meet individually with each board member, and then have the board approve it — **without holding a public budget workshop**. When a reporter challenged this approach (noting that virtually every other Florida local government holds budget workshops), Roberts told the reporter to "**Buzz off.**"

Vice Chair Franklin White strongly disagreed with Roberts' position. After being told what the Executive Director said, White was blunt: "**Bull Shit**" and later stated publicly at a Suwannee County Commission meeting the next day, they "**have to have a workshop** with the Water Utility for the budget."