



**CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA
JULY 7, 2020, REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING
SUMMARY OF COUNCIL ACTION**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Watford called the regular meeting of the City Council for the City of Okeechobee to order on Tuesday, July 7, 2020, at 6:00 P.M. in the City Council Chambers, located at 55 Southeast 3rd Avenue, Room 200, Okeechobee, Florida. Pursuant to Executive Order No. 20-69 issued by Governor DeSantis on March 20, 2020, and extended by Executive Order No. 20-150 effective June 23, 2020, the meeting was conducted utilizing communications media technology (CMT) as provided by Florida Statutes 120.54(5)(b)2, by means of Zoom.com Meeting ID 2459713294. The Host computer was operated by Executive Assistant Brock. The video and audio files were retained as a permanent record. The invocation was offered by Pastor Don Hanna with the First United Methodist Church, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance by Council Member Jarriel.

II. ATTENDANCE

City Clerk Lane Gamiotea called the roll. Mayor Dowling R. Watford, Jr., Council Members Wes Abney, Monica Clark, Bob Jarriel and Bobby Keefe were present in the Chambers.

CITY STAFF: City Attorney John Fumero, City Administrator Marcos MontesDeOca, Police Chief Bob Peterson, Fire Chief Herb Smith, Public Works Director David Allen, Deputy City Clerk Bobbie Jenkins, Finance Director India Riedel, and Executive Assistant Robin Brock were present in the Chambers.

III. AGENDA AND PUBLIC COMMENTS

A. Mayor Watford asked whether there were any agenda items to be added, deferred, or withdrawn. Council Member Clark requested Consent Item C be removed and discussed.

B. Council Member Jarriel moved to approve the agenda as amended; seconded by Council Member Keefe.

VOTE: Ayes-Mayor Watford, Council Members Abney, Clark, Jarriel, and Keefe. Nays-none. Motion Carried.

C. There were no agenda item forms or comment cards submitted for public participation for any issues not on the agenda.

IV. PROCLAMATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

A. On behalf of the City, Mayor Watford and Public Works Director Allen presented Mr. Marvin Roberts with a Longevity Service Award of \$250.00 and a framed certificate which read **"In recognition of your 20-years of service, hard work, and dedication to the City, its citizens, and your fellow employees from July 7, 2000 through July 7, 2020."**

B. Calling the 2020 City General Election, Mayor Watford read the following Proclamation in its entirety for the record: **"Whereas, under and by virtue of the provisions of the Charter, Elections Chapter 26 of the Code of Ordinances for the City of Okeechobee, and Florida State Laws, it is the duty of the Mayor to proclaim and call General City Elections at the time and manner provided therein; and Whereas, proclaiming General City Elections shall be issued by a Proclamation, at least 90 days prior to the date of holding of such election, signed by the Mayor and attested by the City Clerk; and Whereas, such Proclamation shall specify the office or offices to be filled, the cause of the vacancy of such office or offices, and the date of the expiration of the terms of such office or offices; and Whereas, the City Clerk shall publish the Proclamation in the local newspaper at least twice, once being in the fifth week, and once being in the third week, prior to the week in which the General City Election will be held.**

PRESENTATIONS AND PROCLAMATIONS ITEM B CONTINUED: **Now, Therefore, I, Dowling R. Watford, Jr., Mayor of the City of Okeechobee, Florida do hereby proclaim and declare that a General City Election is to be held by the duly qualified electors of the City of Okeechobee, Florida, for the purpose of electing the following officers to serve as such, for four years, beginning January 4, 2021, and ending January 6, 2025, following such election or until their successors are elected and qualified: Two (2) City Council Members. Said General Election shall be held on November 3, 2020, during the regular hours of voting, to wit: from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.; to be held in the County polling or voting places within the Municipal Precinct(s), which have been established by the Supervisor of Elections and Board of County Commissioners for Okeechobee County; and during the Early Voting period as provided by State Law, to be held from October 19, through 31, 2020; or Vote-by-Mail as provided by State Law. In Testimony and Witness of the foregoing Notice of General City Election, I have hereunto set my hand as Mayor of the City of Okeechobee, Florida, and caused the corporate seal of said City to be affixed, and attested to by the City Clerk, this 7th day of July, 2020.”**

V. CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made by Council Member Clark to approve consent agenda items **A through B** [June 16, 2020, Regular meeting minutes; Disposal of obsolete and surplus equipment: 1970 Ford T-2 Water Truck, 1997 Ford F-250 Truck, Back Rack for 2011 Chevrolet Silverado, Bard Air Conditioning Unit, HP Pavilion Slimline computer, Sharp Carousel microwave, Dual Cassette Recorder, three black vertical filing cabinets, unclaimed computer equipment, and miscellaneous unused office supplies (as provided in Exhibit 1)]; seconded by Council Member Keefe.

VOTE: Ayes-Mayor Watford, Council Members Abney, Clark, Jarriel, and Keefe. Nays-none. Motion Carried.

Item C. Council Member Clark questioned the necessity of the purchase due to the on-going negotiations with the County to provide the City fire services. After a brief discussion, it was decided to proceed with the purchase as presented.

Council Member Clark moved to approve the [\$21,280.00] purchase of Opticom Preemption Kits [from Transportation Control Systems of Tampa] for seven Fire Department vehicles [as provided in Exhibit 2]; seconded by Council Member Jarriel.

VOTE: Ayes-Mayor Watford, Council Members Abney, Clark, Jarriel, and Keefe. Nays-none. Motion Carried.

VI. MAYOR WATFORD OPENED THE PUBLIC HEARING AT 6:21 P.M.

A. A motion was made by Council Member Clark to read proposed Ordinance No. 1211 by title only, amending the Sunday sale time and to allow for package sales of alcoholic beverages [as provided in Exhibit 3]; seconded by Council Member Keefe.

VOTE: Ayes-Mayor Watford, Council Members Abney, Clark, Jarriel, and Keefe. Nays-none. Motion Carried.

Attorney Fumero read proposed Ordinance No. 1211 by title only as follows: **“AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA; AMENDING SECTION 6-1 OF CHAPTER 6 OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES TO PROVIDE FOR THE SALE OF ALCOHOL INCLUDING PACKAGE SALES WITHIN THE CITY AT CERTAIN TIMES EVERY DAY; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICT; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.”**

Council Member Clark moved to adopt proposed Ordinance No. 1211; seconded by Council Member Abney.

PUBLIC HEARING ITEM A CONTINUED: Mayor Watford opened the floor for public comments; there was none. He then stated his opinion that the adoption of Ordinance No. 1211 will put the City out of step with County regulations, and that he is opposed to the sale of alcohol before 1:00 P.M. on Sundays.

VOTE: Ayes-Council Members Abney, Clark, Jarriel, and Keefe. Nays-Mayor Watford. Motion Carried.

- B. A motion was made by Council Member Jarriel and seconded by Council Member Clark to read proposed Ordinance No. 1213 by title only, regarding Rezoning Petition No. 20-001-R submitted by Loumax Development Inc. on behalf of the property owner Nemec Children's Trust, to rezone approximately 2.87 acres located in the 500 to 600 blocks along Southwest (SW) 7th Avenue (Ave) from Residential Multiple Family (RMF) to Industrial (IND) [as provided in Exhibit 4; Legal Description. All of Blocks 190 and 191, OKEECHOBEE, Plat Book (PB) 5, Page (PG) 5, public records of Okeechobee County, Florida (FL); together with a portion of the FL East Coast Railway Company ROW, since abandoned, and of North Curve Street (ST), since abandoned, as shown on Plat of FIRST ADDITION TO OKEECHOBEE, FL, as recorded in PB 5, PG 6, of the public records of Okeechobee County, FL, and being more particularly described as follows: Commence at the intersection of the North ROW line of SW 6th ST with the West ROW of SW 7th AVE; thence North 00°08'53" West along the West ROW line of said SW 7th AVE, a distance of 76.17-feet (FT) to the point of beginning (POB); thence South 89°49'42" West, a distance of 199.99-FT to the intersection with the Northerly extension of the West line of Block 251 of said Plat of FIRST ADDITION TO OKEECHOBEE; thence North 00°08'48" West along said Northerly extension, a distance of 693.57-FT to the intersection with the Westerly extension of the North ROW line of SW 4th ST; thence North 89°47'29" East along said Westerly extension, a distance of 60.00-FT to the NW corner of SW 4th ST; Thence South 00°08'48" East along the West ROW line of SW 4th ST, a distance of 100.00-FT to the NW corner of Lot 1, Block 190, OKEECHOBEE, according to the Plat thereof as recorded in PB 5, PG 5, of the public records of Okeechobee County, FL, said point being a point of curvature of a curve to the left and having for its elements, a central angle of 27°36'08 and a radius of 1,230.00-FT; thence Southeasterly along said curve, an arc distance of 592.55-FT to the SE corner of Block 191 of said Plat of OKEECHOBEE; thence South 00°08'53" East along the West ROW line of said SW 7th AVE, a distance of 23.65-FT to the POB].**

VOTE: Ayes-Mayor Watford, Council Members Abney, Clark, Jarriel, and Keefe. Nays-none. Motion Carried.

Attorney Fumero read proposed Ordinance No. 1213 by title only as follows: **"AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA; AMENDING THE OFFICIAL ZONING MAP OF THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE BY REZONING CERTAIN TRACTS OF LAND MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED HEREIN, FROM RMF TO IND ZONING DISTRICT (PETITION NO. 20-001-R); AMENDING THE ZONING MAP ACCORDINGLY; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICT; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE."**

Council Member Clark moved to adopt proposed Ordinance No. 1213; seconded by Council Member Keefe.

Mayor Watford asked the Council to disclose any ex-parte communication. Attorney Fumero elaborated this is a quasi-judicial item requiring the disclosure of any discussion, correspondence, or independent effort to view the property. Council Member Clark disclosed she had a discussion with the applicant's real estate agent Mr. Jim Fowler, and with Planning Board Members Dawn Hoover and Rick Chartier. Mayor Watford, Council Members Abney and Jarriel disclosed they had conversations with the applicant's agent, Mr. Steve Dobbs. Council Member Keefe disclosed he had a conversation with Mr. Dobbs, researched information on the property, and met with the property owner at the site.

The Planning Staff and Planning Board recommend denial based on the following Staff findings: the Applicant currently owns and operates a 1.6-acre industrial site to the North of the subject parcel, which is one of only a few industrial properties South of South Park Street in the City.

PUBLIC HEARING ITEM B CONTINUED: The current surrounding FLU designations are IND to the North, SFR to the East, and MFR to the South and West. The surrounding zoning districts are IND to the North, and Residential Multiple Family (RMF) to the East, South and West. The existing surrounding uses are an industrial manufacturing plant to the North; single family homes and vacant property to the East; a childcare facility to the South; vacant property and a proposed apartment complex to the West. Plans have been submitted for future development of a residential apartment complex to be known as Emerald Greens

Approval of the request is not likely to create a density pattern that will overburden facilities. The proposed use will not impact traffic congestion as this is already a heavily traveled street with adequate capacity for additional traffic. Drainage issues would be considered at time of site plan review. The proposed use has not been inordinately burdened by any unnecessary restrictions.

There were 16 surrounding property owners notified, two signs were posted on the property, the proposed Ordinance was properly advertised in the local newspaper, and one objection has been received to date by Mrs. Linda Knisely of 601 Southwest 4th Street

At the June 16, 2020, meeting Comprehensive FLUM Amendment No. 20-002-SSA was adopted by Ordinance No. 1213 amending the FLU to IND. The Council noted their findings for overturning the Planning Board's recommendation as follows: **the Petition was found to be consistent and compatible with the Comprehensive Plan as it does not increase density, it protects the uses and values of adjacent properties, there are adequate public facilities to serve the proposed use, and there are no environmental impacts.**

VOTE: Ayes-Council Members Abney, Clark, Jarriel, and Keefe. Nays-Mayor Watford. Motion Carried.

- C. **A motion was made by Council Member Jarriel and seconded by Council Member Keefe to read proposed Ordinance No. 1214 by title only, regarding Rezoning Petition No. 20-002-R submitted by the property owner Best Value Real Estate, LLC, to rezone approximately 0.50 acres located at 204 East South Park ST, from RMF to Central Business District (CBD) [as provided in Exhibit 5; Legal Description: CITY OF OKEECHOBEE beginning at the Northeast (NE) corner of Lot 2, Block 171, TOWN OF OKEECHOBEE, PB 5, PG 5, public records of Okeechobee County, FL, and run South along the East line of Lot 2, aforesaid a distance of 142.50-FT. Thence West parallel to South Park ST to the intersection of the West line of Lot 3, Block 171 extended South; thence North along said extended West line a distance of 142.50-FT to the South boundary of South Park ST; thence East along the South boundary of South Park ST to the POB. Said lands also described as follows: Lots 2 and 3, Block 171, TOWN OF OKEECHOBEE, PB 5, PG 5, public records of Okeechobee County, FL, also that part of North Curve ST and part of the former but now abandoned FL East Coast Railroad ROW as shown on Plat of FIRST ADDITION TO TOWN OF OKEECHOBEE, recorded in PB 3, PG 26, public records of St. Lucie County, FL, lying South of and adjacent to said Lots 2 and 3, together with Lot 4, Block 171, TOWN OF OKEECHOBEE, PB 5, PG 5, public records of Okeechobee County, FL. Also that part of North Curve ST as shown on Plat of FIRST ADDITION TO TOWN OF OKEECHOBEE, recorded in PB 3, PG 26, public records of St. Lucie County, FL, lying South of and adjacent to said Lot 4, and lying North of the following described line: commence at the NE corner of Lot 2 of said Block 171; thence South 00°01'50" West, a distance of 142.50-FT; thence South 90°00'00" West, a distance of 100.00-FT to the Southerly extension of the East line of said Lot 4 and the POB; thence continue South 90°00'00" West, a distance of 34.64-FT to the Point of Terminus].**

VOTE: Ayes-Mayor Watford, Council Members Abney, Clark, Jarriel, and Keefe. Nays-none. Motion Carried.

Attorney Fumero read proposed Ordinance No. 1214 by title only as follows: **"AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FL; AMENDING THE OFFICIAL ZONING MAP OF THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE BY REZONING A CERTAIN TRACT OF LAND MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED HEREIN, FROM RMF TO CBD (PETITION NO. 20-002-R); AMENDING THE ZONING MAP ACCORDINGLY; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICT; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE."**

PUBLIC HEARING ITEM C CONTINUED: A motion to adopt proposed Ordinance No. 1214 was made by Council Member Clark and seconded by Council Member Jarriel.

Mayor Watford asked the Council to disclose any ex-parte communication; there were no disclosures made. He also opened the floor for public comment; there was none.

Planning Staff findings are as follows: The current zoning of RMF is not appropriate for the Commercial FLU designation. However, Policy 2.2 of the FLU element specifically lists the CBD Zoning district as appropriate in the Commercial FLU. Medical office is specifically listed as a permitted use in the CBD Zoning District. The proposed use has been providing medical services to the community for many years and does not have an adverse impact on the public interest. The subject property is separated one block from East North Park Street (State Road 70 East), a municipal park area and is within the business area of downtown Okeechobee. The property to the immediate North of the subject parcels is designated Public Facilities on the FLUM and zoned Public Facilities with the use being that of a park. The property to the East is designated Commercial on the FLUM and zoned CBD with the use being that of the Visiting Nurse Association. The property to the South is designated Commercial on the FLUM and zoned Commercial Professional Office (CPO) with the use being The Grand Oaks Assisted Living Facility. The property to the West is designated Commercial on the FLUM and zoned CBD and Light Commercial (CLT) with the parcels being occupied by a retail strip center. No adverse effects are expected with the continued medical office use. The proposed medical use should not cause any nuisances or hazards that would require buffering from the adjacent land uses. The applicant is not proposing any changes in the current use that would increase demand for public utilities or public safety. The proposed use has not been inordinately burdened by unnecessary restrictions.

There were 14 surrounding property owners notified, two signs were posted on the property, the proposed Ordinance was properly advertised in the local newspaper, and no objections or correspondences have been received to date.

VOTE: Ayes-Mayor Watford, Council Members Abney, Clark, Jarriel, and Keefe. Nays-none. Motion Carried.

MAYOR WATFORD CLOSED THE PUBLIC HEARING AT 6:33 P.M.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

- A.** An update was provided on COVID-19 by Mrs. Tiffany Collins, Administrator of the Okeechobee County Florida Department of Health (DOH). The State of Florida is currently still in Phase 2 as issued by Executive Order No. 20-139. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and DOH continue to encourage social distancing, large social gathering limitations, and hand washing. The primary focus of the DOH is to continue contact tracing investigations, and prioritize testing individuals considered to be high-risk such as those hospitalized, health care workers, first responders, long term care facility residents or employees, congregate settings, correctional and juvenile facilities, homeless shelters, individuals with symptoms who are over the age of 65, have a severe disease, or who are pregnant. The DOH created a self-investigation tool that explains what steps individuals should take when testing positive for COVID-19.

There have been approximately 55,000 masks distributed to over 70,000 agencies and businesses in Okeechobee County, with approximately 12,000 more to distribute. Should an agency like to be included as a distribution point, contact Mr. Todd Hardacre at 863-462-5805 to set up a time for delivery. The testing sites available in Okeechobee County are: CVS Pharmacy through the drive-thru; the Florida Community Health Centers, and Treasure Coast Medical Association (TCMA) Urgent Care Clinic. The DOH is offering free high-risk testing.

NEW BUSINESS ITEM A CONTINUED: On July 1, 2020, the DOH received \$139,000,000.00 at the State level in CARES dollars to fund ongoing operations, and to contract positions such as Licenses Practical Nurses and Contact Tracers. Mrs. Collins has requested volunteers from the community to assist in the call center, as there has been a considerable increase in daily calls. The Call Center will have to be closed should a consistent volunteer schedule not be fulfilled. For those interested in volunteering, the schedule is Monday through Friday from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. On July 6, 2020, the DOH Incident Management Team from Region 6 out of Charlotte County came on-site at the Okeechobee Health Care Facility and the TrueCore Department of Juvenile Justice Facility to perform testing on residents, employees, and some family members, due to an increase of exposure to COVID-19. Once the results are received, the DOH will move forward with isolation protocols, if necessary. The DOH has also been aware of individuals having COVID-19 quarantine parties with the purpose of exposing individuals to those who have tested positive.

As of today, Okeechobee County has 451 confirmed cases of COVID-19 ranging in age from zero to 93 years old, has tested 4,106 individuals resulting in a 10.8 percent positivity rate, and has no deaths. The State of Florida has over 213,794 confirmed positive cases with over 16,000 hospitalized and over 3,800 deaths, calculating an overall death rate of 1.82 percent. Florida is currently the ranked number three in the United States in positive cases, behind New York and California. There have been 149 anti-body testing administered in Okeechobee, with five confirmed positive cases resulting in a 3.3 percent positivity rate. It was explained that research has shown there is a high false negativity rate for antibody testing, meaning of those 149 tested there could be more positive results. Mayor Watford and Council Member Clark questioned the protocol for testing individuals who believe they have been exposed to COVID-19. Mrs. Collins explained that due to back-ups in labs, and the shortage of staff, the DOH is currently only testing symptomatic individuals. It is currently taking approximately eight to 11 days to get tests results back. Council Member Abney asked whether the number tested reflects those tested at blood banks. Mrs. Collis explained antigen testing performed at blood banks is included, anti-body testing is not. The Council thanked Mrs. Collins for the update. No official action was required.

- B. Ms. Kathy Scott, Vice Director of Okeechobee Main Street (OKMS) Arts & Cultural Alliance Committee explained the goal to install the Cattle Drive Sculpture Project is in 2021. She made a request to place "Future Home Of" signs in Park No. 5 (Park L, of FLAGLER PARK) to bring community awareness of the Project and its placement as it continues to move forward. One sign will face West North Park Street (State Road 70 West) and the other towards West South Park Street. The signs will be constructed to withstand the elements and aesthetically pleasing to the Park landscape. She then distributed a copy of the conceptual layout and wording of the signs, which included the type of construction material and location. Donations for the project can be made online or at OKMS' office. Mayor Watford read a letter of support submitted by Mrs. Jennifer Tewksbury, Executive Director of the Economic Council of Okeechobee (ECOK), as follows: "The ECOK fully supports Okeechobee Main Street's Arts and Cultural Alliance's request to install temporary signage in Downtown Flagler Park No. 5 to continue fundraising and gathering community support for the Cattle Drive Sculpture Project. This art installation Main Street has taken the lead on will contribute greatly to our downtown area and will be an impressive attraction to draw visitors to the City."

A Motion was made by Council Member Jarriel to approve a request by OKMS to install two 4-foot by 8-foot signs in Park No.5 [PARK L of FLAGLER PARK, TOWN OF OKEECHOBEE, Plat Book 1, Page 10 Okeechobee County public records] for the Cattle Drive Sculpture Project for approximately one year and waive any applicable sign permit fees [as provided in Exhibit 6]; seconded by Council Member Keefe.

VOTE: Ayes-Mayor Watford, Council Members Abney, Clark, Jarriel, and Keefe. Nays-none. Motion Carried.

- C. **A motion was made by Council Member Clark to rescind the designation of Fire Engine 5 as surplus and its donation to St. James-Lanark Volunteer Fire Department and transfer the Engine to the Public Works Department to replace the T-2 water truck [as provided in Exhibit 7]; seconded by Council Member Keefe.**

VOTE: Ayes-Mayor Watford, Council Members Abney, Clark, Jarriel, and Keefe. Nays-none. Motion Carried.

- D. **A motion was made by Council Member Abney to approve the renewal of Public Risk Management (PRM), Inc., Group Health Trust for the Health Insurance Policy Plan No. PPO 0727 (Blue Cross/Blue Shield) [as provided in Exhibit 8]; seconded by Council Member Clark.**

A memorandum submitted by Finance Director Riedel explained the City's claim experience has significantly improved from the prior three to five years, with no large medical claims during the current policy year (i.e. \$150,000 or more). The PRM Group has an overall increase of 5.5 percent, but the application of the City's claims experience rating resulted in a 4.5 percent increase. Based on the number of employees, the fiscal impact equates to \$31,695.84 overall increase in premiums for the renewal. The City is continuing to take a long term approach regarding the health of its employees by continuing the current benefits including the Clinic. The current Blue Cross/Blue Shield Plan 0727 premium will increase for employee only coverage from \$850.70 to \$888.98, employee and spouse from \$2,123.81 to \$2,183.86, employee and child(ren) from \$1,698.25 to \$1,750.94, and employee and family from \$2,708.95 to \$2,830.85.

VOTE: Ayes-Mayor Watford, Council Members Abney, Clark, Jarriel, and Keefe. Nays-none. Motion Carried.

- E. **A motion was made by Council Member Clark to approve Addendum No. 3 to the Contract for medical services with TCMA [as provided in Exhibit 9]; seconded by Council Member Abney.**

This is a two-year extension to the existing piggyback contract with Okeechobee County, billed monthly in the amount of \$2,571.00, plus lab fees and medication costs billed quarterly at cost. Representatives of TCMA were in attendance via Zoom.com for questions.

VOTE: Ayes-Mayor Watford, Council Members Abney, Clark, Jarriel, and Keefe. Nays-none. Motion Carried.

- F. Council Member Clark requested this item be placed on this agenda to compare to the information provided by the County for the proposed Interlocal Agreement (ILA) for Fire Services. Administrator MontesDeOca explained the content included within Exhibit 10 provided detailed data received from the County to aid in calculating projected revenues from Emergency Medical Services (EMS) in the City. The personnel and supplies costs to provide both EMS and Fire Services is estimated to increase the current budget by \$226,843.00.

The County provided detailed call breakdowns, gross earnings and the sources of revenue for the individual years of 2017 to 2019. It also included the average Medicaid and Medicare payments for transports, as well as the breakdown of payees by percentages. A draft of the capital improvement expenditures provided for two E-450 Ambulances, Lifepaks, Equipment, miscellaneous items, and radios totaling \$395,000.00.

Based on the projections analyzed in detail, Administrator MontesDeOca and Finance Director Riedel found the City could see a savings and further provided how the millage rate could be reduced by approximately 1.6268 mills.

Council Member Jarriel was of the opinion that this discussion was premature. Council Member Abney had questions but will meet with the Administrator and Finance Director to discuss them. **No action was taken on this item.**

- G. The City and County held a Joint Workshop on June 25, 2020, to discuss items of negotiation for the draft of an ILA for Fire Services provided by the County to the City. The direction given at the Workshop was there were multiple issues to address by each entity before costs could be further refined. Prior to discussing the information provided in Exhibit 11, Mayor Watford read a letter received from the ECOK into the record as follows: "The ECOK continues to support a contract for fire rescue services between the City of Okeechobee and Okeechobee County. As stated by Ms. Tori Fatjo, IAFF District 12 Representative at the May 19, 2020 City Council meeting, many other municipalities have recognized the long-term economic benefits provided by an interlocal agreement of this nature. Our small, fiscally constrained community cannot continue to ignore the cost advantages and increased efficiencies available to us through basic economics of scale. The proposed alternative to instead implement EMS Services in the City is inherently the direct opposite of this widely understood economic principle. Thank you for continuing to engage in this discussion and for being transparent to the public in your decision-making."

The consensus of the Council was to participate in the County Fire Assessment Study being performed by Stantec, which will cost an estimated \$8,750.00.

The County originally proposed to utilize City Fire Station One for equipment and vehicle storage. They are now requesting to utilize the Station to run calls for unknown period of time. After a brief discussion, **the consensus of the Council was to allow the County to use the building with the Administrator negotiating the length of time and reimbursement of costs.**

There was a brief discussion on the City paying for employees who are not Paramedics. **It was clarified and agreed the City will cover up to 10 Paramedic certifications.**

The consensus of the Council was to cover the salaries and benefits of the additional personnel transferring to the County in excess of the seven positions needed until attrition takes place.

The discussion then turned to the potential buy-out of employees who have entered the Deferred Retirement Option Plan. As this is a complicated matter, it was suggested that the Administrator continue to research options and the employees' interest. Additional discussion is needed with the Pension Attorney to obtain the options that are allowed to be offered to vested and non-vested members.

Council Member Clark questioned the difference in pay for City employees transferring to the County. It is her opinion that employees should be transferred making the same rate of pay, with an increase given upon receipt of their Paramedic certification. Mayor Watford explained salary negotiations is part of the Union, for which the County will have to determine whether they are willing to open negotiations to address the salary discrepancies. Administrator MontesDeOca was instructed to gather more information on this.

Attorney Fumero provided a brief overview of the legal/procedural options available to effectuate the transfer of fire services to Okeechobee County. Florida's constitution provides that transfer of functions to another local government may occur after approval by vote of the electors of both local governments, or as otherwise provided by law. Florida Statutes allows a county to merge services such as fire protection subject to consent by ordinance of the affected municipality authorizing an interlocal agreement in reliance on municipal home rule powers as well as Florida Statutes sections 166.021 and 125.01(q). It was his legal opinion that there was no legal risk with a dual referendum, as an interlocal agreement can be challenged in court. After a brief discussion, **the consensus of the Council was to continue negotiations of an ILA.**

NEW BUSINESS ITEM G CONTINUED: Mayor Watford opened the floor for public comments. Mr. Noel Chandler addressed the Council by explaining he had researched the last time the City wanted the County to provide Fire services, which was in 1987. The County was presented with 44 articles to read, and decided it would not be fiscally responsible to provide these services. He continued by replying to a comment previously made regarding redundancy, as it is his opinion that was caused by OSHA regulations. The City or County could not comply as individual agencies, so a mutual aid agreement was generated. He is also researching when the County imposed taxing City residents. Lastly, he explained when the item of implementing EMS services was presented in the past, the City did not have the resources to draw from. The demographics are different now. The City has invested in training the personnel, so utilize the assets on hand.

The Commissioners will be discussing their items from the Workshop on July 9, 2020. The two Administrators will then begin working on costs to present at a second Joint Workshop.

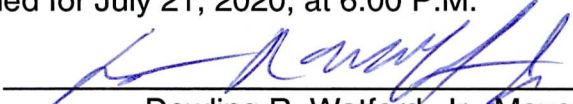
VIII. COUNCIL COMMENTS

Council Member Jarriel congratulated Council Member Abney on his engagement, and Attorney Fumero on his appointment to the Board of the Palm Beach County Food Bank.

IX. There being no further items on the agenda, Mayor Watford adjourned the meeting at 8:18 P.M. The next regular meeting is scheduled for July 21, 2020, at 6:00 P.M.

ATTEST:


Lane Gamiotea, CMC, City Clerk


Dowling R. Watford, Jr., Mayor

Please take notice and be advised that when a person decides to appeal any decision made by the City Council with respect to any matter considered at this meeting, he/she may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceeding is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. City Clerk media are for the sole purpose of backup for official records of the Clerk.