



CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA
OCTOBER 6, 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, October 6, 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. 20-246 effective September 30, 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, audio, and digital comments were recorded and retained as a permanent record. The invocation was offered by Mayor Watford, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance by Council Member Keefe.

II. ATTENDANCE

Roll Call was taken by City Clerk Lane Gamiotea to establish a quorum. Members present: Mayor Dowling R. Watford, Jr., Council Members Wes Abney, Monica Clark, Bob Jarriel, and Bobby Keefe. City Attorney John Fumero was in attendance.

Department Heads in attendance: City Administrator Marcos MontesDeOca, Police Chief Bob Peterson, Fire Chief Herb Smith, and Public Works Director David Allen. Additional support staff in attendance: Deputy City Clerk Bobbie Jenkins, Major Donald Hagan, General Services Coordinator Patty Burnette, Finance Director India Riedel, and Executive Assistant Robin Brock.

III. AGENDA AND PUBLIC COMMENTS

A. Mayor Watford asked whether there were any agenda items to be added, deferred, or withdrawn; New Business Items H and I were added.

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. Mayor Watford proclaimed the month of October 2020 as "Domestic Violence Prevention Month." The document was accepted by Mr. Jonathan Bean and Ms. Edna Malagon of Martha's House, and read into the record as follows: "Whereas one in every four women will experience domestic violence during her lifetime; and Whereas, victims should have help to find the compassion, comfort and healing they need, and domestic abusers should be punished to the full extent of the law; and Whereas, fleeing domestic violence has caused women and children to be the fastest growing homeless population; and Whereas powerful partnerships exist locally between the City of Okeechobee and Martha's House Domestic Violence Services; and Whereas, the President of the United States and Congress as well as other federal agencies have expressed a commitment to eliminating domestic violence both nationally and internationally. Now Therefore, I, Dowling R. Watford, Jr., Mayor of the City of Okeechobee, hereby do proclaim October 2020 as 'Domestic Violence Awareness Month' in the City of Okeechobee in recognition of the important work done by domestic violence programs and victims' service providers, and urge all citizens to actively participate in the scheduled activities and programs sponsored by Martha's House of Okeechobee and other community organizations to work toward the elimination of personal and institutional violence against women and girls."

IV. PROCLAMATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS CONTINUED

- B. On behalf of the City, Mayor Watford presented Administrator MontesDeOca with a Longevity Service Award, being a silver pen engraved with his name, and a framed certificate which read **"In recognition of your five-years of service, hard work, and dedication to the City, its citizens, and your fellow employees from October 1, 2015 through October 1, 2020."**

V. CONSENT AGENDA

A motion and second was made by Council Members Clark and Abney to approve consent agenda items A through B [September 21, 2020, Regular Meeting and Final Budget Public Hearing minutes; annual renewal of the Letter of Understanding with CAS Governmental Services, LLC in the amount of \$18,000.00 for Legislative Services (as provided in Exhibit 1)].

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

VI. NEW BUSINESS

- A. **A motion was offered by Council Member Keefe to adopt proposed Resolution No. 2020-15 regarding broadband access and affordability [as provided in Exhibit 2]; seconded by Council Member Jarriel.**

Attorney Fumero read proposed Resolution No. 2020-15 by title only as follows: **"A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA URGING CONGRESS TO RECOGNIZE AND WORK TO ACHIEVE BROADBAND ACCESS AND AFFORDABILITY; SUPPORTING INCLUSION OF BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE IN FEDERAL INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS; AND AFFIRMING SUPPORT FOR LOCAL CONTROL OF BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE SITING; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE."**

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

- B. **A motion was offered by Council Member Clark to adopt proposed Resolution No. 2020-16 recognizing Florida City Government Week [as provided in Exhibit 3]; seconded by Council Member Jarriel.**

Attorney Fumero read proposed Resolution No. 2020-16 by title only as follows: **"A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA; RECOGNIZING THE WEEK OF OCTOBER 19 THROUGH 25, 2020, AS "FLORIDA CITY GOVERNMENT WEEK" AND ENCOURAGING ALL FLORIDA CITY OFFICIALS TO SUPPORT THIS CELEBRATION BY PARTICIPATING IN THE 'MY CITY: I'M PART OF IT, I'M PROUD OF IT!' ACTIVITIES; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE."**

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

- C. **A motion was offered by Council Member Jarriel to adopt proposed Resolution No. 2020-17 regarding federal funding assistance to municipalities due to the Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) [as provided in Exhibit 4]; seconded by Council Member Keefe.**

Attorney Fumero read proposed Resolution No. 2020-17 by title only as follows: **"A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA, REQUESTING THAT CONGRESS PASS LEGISLATION PROVIDING DIRECT FUNDING ASSISTANCE TO ALL MUNICIPALITIES TO HELP MITIGATE EXPENDITURES AND CURRENT AND FUTURE LOSSES AS A RESULT OF THE NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) PANDEMIC; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE."**

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

VI. NEW BUSINESS CONTINUED

- D. **A motion and second was made by Council Members Clark and Keefe to adopt the proposed School Resource Officer (SRO) Agreement with the Okeechobee County School Board [as provided in Exhibit 5].**

Attorney Fumero explained the School Board requested an amendment to the proposed SRO Agreement to add specific language pertaining to employment verification utilizing the e-verify system as mandated in Florida Statute 448.095. It is his opinion the language is unnecessary, as the City abides by all laws of the Florida Statute. As per the Agreement, the City will provide a SRO to Central Elementary and the Okeechobee Freshman Campus for a period of ten months, and be reimbursed \$95,110.00 by the School Board quarterly for Fiscal Year 2020-21.

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

- E. **A motion was made by Council Member Jarriel to adopt a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Okeechobee County for Traffic Control Preemption [as provided in Exhibit 6]; seconded by Council Member Clark.**

The MOU pertains to the installation and maintenance of the Opticom Infrared System by the County in City maintained, Florida Department of Transportation owned traffic signals at the intersections of Parrott Avenue/U.S. Highway 441 and North Park Street/State Road 70, Parrott Avenue and South 21st Street, as well as future intersections jointly agreed upon. The System allows fire and rescue vehicles to communicate with the intersection traffic signal controller to gain a temporary right-of-way.

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

- F. At the September 21, 2020 meeting, forming a citizen board for Flagler Park Improvements was requested to be discussed at tonight's meeting. The Council was reminded that the City has an established Design Review Board (DRB). Clerk Gamiotea explained Part II, Chapter 70, Article II, Division 9, Section 70-211 of the Code of Ordinances provides for the establishment and composition of a DRB. Section 70-212(b) speaks directly to the preparation or review of a master action plan for the visual improvement of key areas in the urban landscape in the City, including recommendations.

Council Member Abney stated he would like to create a new citizen board specifically for the Flagler Park Improvements. Council Members Clark, Jarriel, and Keefe agreed. Mayor Watford disagreed, as it is his opinion that the members currently appointed to the Planning Board/Board of Adjustments/Design Review Board are fully capable of handling this task. Discussion ensued. Attorney Fumero interjected and explained a resolution could be adopted creating a limited subjective board with a specific task, and upon completion of the task it will sunset.

Council Member Clark made a motion to form a citizen board tasked to work with the landscape architect [to be contracted by Request for Qualifications No. ADM 03-32-09-20] for the Flagler Park Improvements; seconded by Council Member Jarriel. After a brief discussion, the motion and second were withdrawn.

Council Member Clark made a motion to form a citizen board with seven regular members and two alternates, City or County residents; seconded by Council Member Jarriel.

Council Member Keefe suggested the citizen board consist of representatives from the City, Public Works, Okeechobee Utility Authority, Board of County Commissioners, County Parks and Recreation, Okeechobee Main Street, Okeechobee Historical Society, Chamber of Commerce, Seminole Tribe of Florida, Veterans Services Council, and the Economic Council of Okeechobee.

VII. NEW BUSINESS CONTINUED

ITEM F CONTINUED: Council Member Keefe is of the opinion that access to grants, private funding, and fundraising are an intricate part of achieving these improvements.

Mr. Kevin Kenny of WOKC asked about the length of time applications would be taken. Mayor Watford replied that will be addressed during the adoption of a resolution.

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

- G. A memorandum regarding the status of the Fire Services Interlocal Agreement (ILA) provided by Attorney Fumero was distributed at the meeting, and addressed the issues brought about at the September 21, 2020 meeting. Since that time, he has had numerous interactions with the County Attorney and Administrator, resulting in the following: the County is requesting the seven City Firefighters currently in paramedic school file a completed County employment application on or before October 16, 2020, to ensure proper vetting. These employees have been provided this information in writing by the Administrator.

It has been recommended to change the proposed commencement date of the ILA to allow reasonable time for the seven City firefighters to complete the paramedic coursework requirements and obtain certification. **The consensus of the Council was to change the proposed commencement date of the proposed ILA from April 1, 2021 to June 1, 2021.**

The County is currently working out the terms and conditions of the proposed temporary positions funded by the City through the County payroll system. There is a maximum number of three positions, with the option of enrolling in paramedic training in the future. The Council must decide on the number of positions to fund, and the duration of time the positions will be funded. The discussion resulted in **a consensus of funding three temporary positions for a two year period, with priority given to employees with the most seniority who may fail the paramedic certification.**

The discussion then turned to the draft separation payouts provided at the meeting. Page one of the handout provided OPTION 1, which offers employees with zero to five years of service a lump sum equal to five weeks of gross pay, and those with over 10 years of service a lump sum equal to 20 weeks of gross pay. The total gross payout for Option 1 is \$180,207.59. Page two of the handout provided OPTION 2, which offers employees with zero to 10 years of service one week of gross pay for every one-year of service, and those with over 10 years of service a lump sum equal to 20 weeks gross pay. The total gross payout for Option 2 is \$165,275.79. **The consensus of the Council was to offer OPTION 2 as a separation payout.** The Fire Chief will be offered the migration administrator position, and upon acceptance of the position his separation payout will be deducted from the total. There was a brief discussion on offering the Fire Chief separation pay. Attorney Fumero confirmed that OPTION 2 would not be available to the Fire Chief, as he would not be separating employment should he accept the position. This can be considered further at a future meeting.

Council Member Clark questioned the combination of six paramedics and one inspector to seven paramedics in the ILA, as this was a change to the initial ILA. Attorney Fumero confirmed the specific wording of positions has never been a point of discussion, but he would clarify the language with the County Attorney.

Council Member Abney questioned the letter received from Local 2918 President Josh Borgstrom, which recommended the Council postpone taking action on the proposed ILA until October 1, 2021. The Council thanked Mr. Borgstrom for the letter, but did not act on the recommendation.

Fire Chief Smith thanked the Council for the separation payouts offered to his employees. It is his understanding that all firefighters will be applying at the County.

VI. NEW BUSINESS CONTINUED

ITEM G CONTINUED. The timetable for execution of a finalized ILA, with exhibits, is on or before October 13, 2020, with a presentation date of October 20, 2020 to the Council.

- H. ITEM ADDED TO AGENDA. **Council Member Jarriel moved to approve a 30-day extension for the Centennial Park Restroom and Pavilion Improvements [Bid No. PW 01-00-12-19] to November 14, 2020** [as provided in Exhibit 7]; **seconded by Council Member Keefe**. There was a brief discussion on this item.

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

- I. ITEM ADDED TO AGENDA. Mayor Watford requested insight on having a Town Hall meeting in October, as attendance at previous meetings has been low. He suggested coffee with a Council Member be hosted by individual Council Members at a location of their choosing. **After a brief discussion, the consensus of the Council was to schedule a Town Hall meeting on November 5, 2020, at 5:00 P.M. in the Council Chambers.**

VII. COUNCIL COMMENTS

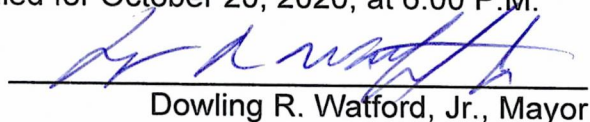
Council Member Abney thanked Chief Peterson for the traffic and vehicle summary data reports he provided. Chief Peterson confirmed there were 529 traffic stops, 305 warnings and 191 citations issued, 32 accidents, and 640 actual calls for service during the month of September.

Council Member Jarriel questioned the status of the mandatory connection resolution with Okeechobee Utility Authority (OUA). Administrator MontesDeOca replied he has been in contact with the OUA Director, and is waiting on additional items to provide to the City Attorney in order to begin the draft.


Council Member Keefe asked for clarification from Attorney Fumero on the future revision of the Personnel Policies and Procedures manual, as it is his opinion the longevity service award amounts are not current with trends. He then thanked the Code Enforcement Department for the update on current Cases the Council received via email. After a brief discussion on declaring properties a public nuisance, Staff was directed to include an update on the next agenda.

Council Member Clark suggested Council Member Abney be appointed to the Citizens Charter Review Advisory Committee to fill the seat left vacant by Mr. Steve Dobbs due to a conflict with dual office holding. Attorney Fumero advised making him an ex-officio member until January 2021 when his City Council term ends. Mayor Watford disagreed with the suggestion, as the application process has closed and the Committee has been appointed. After further discussion, it was decided to add this item for discussion at the next meeting.

- VIII.** There being no further items on the agenda, Mayor Watford adjourned the meeting at 7:48 P.M. The next regular meeting is scheduled for October 20, 2020, at 6:00 P.M.


Dowling R. Watford, Jr., Mayor

ATTEST:


Lane Gamiotea, CMC, City Clerk

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.