



CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA
OCTOBER 5, 2021, REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING
OFFICIAL MEETING MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Watford called the regular meeting of the City Council for the City of Okeechobee to order on October 5, 2021, at 6:00 P.M. in the City Council Chambers, located at 55 Southeast 3rd Avenue, Room 200, Okeechobee, Florida. The invocation was offered by Pastor Chad Keathley of the Okeechobee Church of God, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Council Member Chandler.

II. ATTENDANCE

Roll was taken by City Clerk Lane Gamiotea to establish a quorum. Members present: Mayor Dowling R. Watford, Jr., Council Members Noel Chandler, Monica Clark, Bob Jarriel, and Bobby Keefe.

III. AGENDA AND PUBLIC COMMENTS

- A. Mayor Watford asked whether there were any agenda items to be added, deferred, or withdrawn. New Business Item F, Exhibit 3 was added.
- B. Motion by Council Member Keefe, seconded by Council Member Chandler to approve the agenda as amended. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**
- C. There were no agenda item forms or comment cards submitted for public participation.

IV. PRESENTATION AND PROCLAMATIONS

- A. Mayor Watford yielded the floor to Police Chief Hagan who explained changes in personnel after his promotion to Chief. He will not be filling the position of Major, however he is creating a second Lieutenant position. Current Lieutenant Justin Bernst will have more administrative duties assigned and the added position will take over the duties of road patrol and dispatcher supervisor, Auxiliary liaison, and the neighborhood watch program. Chief Hagan introduced newly promoted Road Unit Lieutenant Belen Reyna and gave a summary of his career over the last 17 years. Chief Hagan presented the new badge to Lieutenant Reyna's wife, who proudly pinned his uniform. Lieutenant Reyna was accompanied by his children, many family members, and several co-workers. He offered his gratitude to Chief Hagan and the City Council.

Chief Hagan then introduced Officer Chad Troutman who is being promoted to Road Patrol Sergeant and gave a summary of his career over the last 15 years. Chief Hagan presented the new badge to Sergeant Troutman's daughter, who proudly pinned his uniform. Sergeant Troutman was accompanied by his family and several co-workers. He also offered his gratitude to Chief Hagan and the City Council.

V. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Motion by Council Member Clark, seconded by Council Member Jarriel to approve the Consent Agenda Items [September 27, 2021, meeting minutes as revised and provided via email]. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

VI. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Motion and second by Council Members Keefe and Jarriel to move Mr. Joe Papasso from alternate to regular member and appoint Mr. David McAuley as a new alternate member to the Planning Board, Board of Adjustment, and Design Review Board, terms being October 6, 2021, through April 30, 2023 [as presented in Exhibit 1]. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

VI. NEW BUSINESS CONTINUED

- B.** As required by the Interlocal Agreement for Fire Services, County Fire Rescue Chief Ralph Franklin provided a report on services provided within the City from August 2 through September 30, 2021. They responded to 249 dispatched calls, of which 211 were for emergency medical services. The City's call volume is approximately 18 percent of the County's total dispatched calls. They completed 39 fire prevention inspections of which 11 were signed and completed, with 28 scheduled for reinspections as well as three site plan reviews and 15 preplan events for businesses. In response to questions from the Council, he stated the County has two personnel vacancies. They hired five of the City employees of which two have resigned. This item is for informational purposes, no official action required.
- C.** Okeechobee Utility Authority (OUA) Executive Director John Hayford presented an update on projects on behalf of Chairperson John Creasman, who was on vacation. He covered the three types of wastewater collection alternatives, the advantages, and disadvantages of each and the Southwest Service Area projects. Project 1 consists of a master pump station and force main, and diversion force main. The expected total cost of \$6,186,939.00 is fully funded by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP). They anticipate construction to begin by January 2022. Project 2 consists of the collection system and two master vacuum stations to provide approximately 700 new connections. The estimated cost is \$10,830,783.00, and \$612,756.00 for the Oak Lake Estates portion. It is partially funded by FDEP Appropriations with the remainder to be funded from a United States Department of Agriculture loan. Construction is to begin tentatively by December 2022. Project 3 consists of the Okee-Tantie force main, and the State Road 78 service corridor to provide approximately 600 new connections. The expected cost is \$8,575,000.00 and is fully funded by FDEP Appropriations. They anticipate construction to begin by December 2022. When completed, these projects are expected to remove annually, 12.4 tons of nitrogen and 3 tons of phosphorus from being discharged into the waterways. The final project is the Southwest 5th Avenue Septic to Sewer. The collection alternative has not been selected to date therefore the estimated cost has not been determined. However, design is expected by Summer 2022, with construction by December. Maps identifying the specific locations for each project were included within the slides. In response to questions from the City Council, Mr. Hayford replied the OUA is currently at 30 percent capacity for wastewater and 50 percent capacity for water. New connections are offered payment plan options and the total fees have been significantly reduced from years past. The 14-slide power point presentation has been incorporated into the official minute file. This item is for information purposes, no official action required.
- D.** A discussion was held as to whether to continue utilizing the Flagler Park Design Review Advisory Committee (FPDRAC) for Flagler Park master plan design recommendations or streamline the process with a working group being the City Administrator, Okeechobee Main Street (OKMS), and the landscape architect. A copy of Resolution No. 2020-18 establishing the FPDRAC was distributed for reference. A motion was offered by Council Member Keefe to disband the FPDRAC and direct the City Administrator to coordinate with OKMS on the completion of the rest of the Flagler Park master design; seconded by Council Member Jarriel. Ms. Angie Griffin, OKMS President and Mrs. Jennifer Tewksbury, Economic Council Executive Director and FPDRAC Member, addressed the Council during the discussion. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**
- E.** Council Member Keefe moved to approve an Agreement for Sale and Purchase of Commerce Center lots with OUA [as presented in Exhibit 2, for \$32,640.00, legal description: Lots 13 and 14, Lot 6 less the South 40-feet, and a strip of land adjoining Lots 6 and 13 and lying North of the cul-de-sac, CITY OF OKEECHOBEE COMMERCE CENTER, Plat Book 7, Pages 10-15, Okeechobee County public records]; seconded by Council Member Clark. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

VI. NEW BUSINESS CONTINUED

- F.** ITEM ADDED TO AGENDA: Motion and second by Council Members Jarriel and Keefe to approve a 2021-22 Fiscal Year Budget Amendment in the amount of \$50,000.00 to the Capital Improvements Project Fund, for a total projected expense to be \$100,000.00 for the Cattlemen's Square [Block L of F"AGLER PARK/Park No. 5, as presented in Exhibit 3]. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

VII. CITY ATTORNEY UPDATE

Attorney Fumero had no new information to provide to Council.

VIII. CITY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE

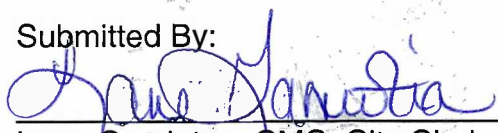
Administrator Ritter announced there are two public input meetings scheduled for October 6 at 10:00 and 11:00 A.M., as required for the Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program grant applications. He also thanked the Economic Council for their letters of support provided on the City's behalf for the grant applications. Changes to regular scheduled City Council meetings were requested and approved by consensus. **The October 19 meeting will be held October 26, the November 2 meeting is cancelled. There will be a joint workshop and special meeting with the City Council and City Charter Review Advisory Committee on November 4, at 6:00 P.M.**

IX. COUNCIL COMMENTS

Council Member Chandler led a harmonious song of happy birthday to Executive Assistant Robin Brock. **Council Member Jarriel** reminded everyone about the Coffee with a Cop tomorrow, 7:00 to 9:00 A.M. at Serenity Café and commended the turnout for the Cattlemen's Square groundbreaking. **Council Member Keefe** asked whether the remainder of the Council received an email regarding a serious complaint against the County Fire Rescue. The email will be forwarded to City Clerk Gamiotea and Executive Assistant Brock for disseminating to the Council Members, Attorney, Administrator, and staff to ensure the complaint is followed up on. He thanked the Council for allowing him to speak prior to the meeting on the celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month.

X. ADJOURN, Mayor Watford adjourned the meeting at 7:16 P.M.

Submitted By:


 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, s/he 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.