



**CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA
OCTOBER 4, 2022, REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING
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 4, 2022, 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 Okeechobee Church of God; followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Council Member Chandler.

II. ATTENDANCE

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

III. AGENDA AND PUBLIC COMMENTS

A. New Business, Item IV.F, Exhibit 4, Interlocal Agreement with the Board of County Commissioners for the removal of storm debris; and Item IV. G, Exhibit 5, William Saum Settlement Agreement, were added.

B. Motion and second by Council Members Keefe and Jarriel to approve the agenda as amended. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

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

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Motion and second by Council Members Jarriel and Clark to read by title only, proposed Ordinance No. 1264, regarding Rezoning Petition No. 22-006-R, submitted by the City as the property owner to rezone Lots 6 and 7 of Block 5, ROYAL OAK ADDITION, located at Southwest (SW) 3rd Avenue and 23rd Street from Public Use (PUB) to Residential Single Family-One (RSF-1) [as presented in **Exhibit 1**]. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

City Attorney John Fumero read into the record the title of proposed Ordinance No. 1264 as follows: **"AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA; AMENDING THE OFFICIAL ZONING MAP OF THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE BY REZONING A CERTAIN TRACT OF LAND MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED HEREIN, FROM PUB TO RSF-1, PETITION NO. 22-006-R; AMENDING THE ZONING MAP ACCORDINGLY; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICT; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE."**

Motion and second by Council Members Keefe and Jarriel to approve the first reading of proposed Ordinance No. 1264 and set November 1, 2022, as the final hearing date. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

B. Motion and second by Council Members Chandler and Jarriel to read by title only, proposed Ordinance No. 1265, regarding Rezoning Petition No. 22-007-R, submitted by the City, as the property owner, to rezone Lots 9 through 12 of Block 8, SOUTH OKEECHOBEE, located at 1003 SW 3rd Avenue from RSF-1 to PUB [as presented in **Exhibit 2**]. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

Attorney Fumero read into the record the title of proposed Ordinance No. 1265 as follows: **"AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA; AMENDING THE OFFICIAL ZONING MAP OF THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE BY REZONING A CERTAIN TRACT OF LAND MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED HEREIN, FROM RSF-1 TO PUB, PETITION NO. 22-007-R; AMENDING THE ZONING MAP ACCORDINGLY; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICT; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE."**

Motion and second by Council Members Keefe and Clark to approve the first reading of proposed Ordinance No. 1265 and set November 1, 2022, as the final hearing date. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

C. Mr. John Creasman, Okeechobee Utility Authority (OUA) Board Chairperson, presented an update of projects through an eleven-slide power point presentation. The first was their SW 5th Avenue Project to expand wastewater collection in this area for customers within the City Limits. They considered three options, vacuum sewer, gravity sewer, and low-pressure sewer (LPS).

IV. NEW BUSINESS CONTINUED

C. Continued. All have their pros and cons which led to considering a blended/staggered option where the OUA could consider immediately moving forward with design, permitting, and construction of a LPS system to serve the residential area (from SW 5th to 7th Avenue's), and then consider future expansion of the gravity sewer for the commercial corridor (SW 3rd to South Parrott Avenue) in the future. He then reviewed the Southwest Service Area (SWSA) Project 1, the master force main and pump station are currently under construction, the SWSA SE 2 Interconnect is in design and permitting. Both the SWSA Project 2 Collection System and Project 3 Okee-Tanie/State Road 78 are in the design and permitting stage. The Treasure Island Project is being reviewed for engineering, this is a large project that the OUA has received funding for and will eliminate over 2,500 septic tanks. The Pine Ridge Park Project is under construction. Mr. Creasman along with Mr. John Hayford, OUA Executive Director responded to Council questions. There was concern expressed in regards to using the LPS system for the SW 5th Avenue Project. Mr. Creasman acknowledged those concerns and advise he would convey them to the OUA Board and request to look at all options. A copy of the power point has been incorporated into the official minute file. This item was for informational purposes, no official action required.

D. A discussion was held regarding the current protocol for Code Enforcement reduction of fines. Council Member Jarriel expressed his concern that the Code Enforcement Magistrate recently approved a fine reduction of 75 percent on a \$10,000.00 fine. In order to provide historic practices on fine reduction, Chief Hagan distributed two spreadsheets, which have been incorporated into the official minute file.

One spreadsheet provided in table format, nine cases that went before the City Council requesting fine reductions between January 2020 through April 2021. Of those nine, one was approved for a reduction of 50 percent, one for 70 percent, one for 75 percent, two for 80 percent, and four for 90 percent, none were repeat violators. The Council, by ordinance in April 2021, gave the authorization to the Special Magistrate to approve all future fine reduction requests. The second spreadsheet provided in table format, nine cases that went before the Special Magistrate requesting fine reductions between May 2021 through September 2022. Seven were approved for a reduction of 75 percent, one was approved for 90 percent due to special circumstances, and one noted as a repeat violator was approved for 50 percent.

City Attorney Greg Hyden was in attendance and reviewed Florida Statutes Chapter 162 which addresses Code Enforcement and gave an overview of the process required when approving fine reductions. It was also noted that the intent of issuing fines is to gain compliance and never to be looked at as a source of revenue. The discussion continued with Code Enforcement Officers Anthony Smith and Christina Curl, Chief Hagan, Attorneys Fumero and Hyden responding to questions from the Council. The outcome was for Staff to re-develop their current matrix used when making their recommendation for fine reduction requests to the Special Magistrate, to include the length of time it takes for the property to come into compliance and efforts made by the property owner. It was not noted whether this would need to come back before the Council.

E. Motion and second by Council Members Clark and Keefe to approve a Police Fleet purchase of four 2023 Dodge Chargers in the amount of \$145,748.00 from Garber Fleet Sales [via the Florida Sheriff's Association bid as presented in **Exhibit 3**]. A motion to amend the motion on the floor, to purchase five 2023 Dodge Chargers, was made by Council Member Clark and seconded by Council Member Jarriel. **Motion to Amend Carried Unanimously. Motion as Amended Carried Unanimously.**

F. Added Item. Motion and second by Council Members Keefe and Clark to approve an Interlocal Agreement with Okeechobee County for storm debris removal and monitoring [as presented in **Exhibit 4**]. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

G. Added Item. Motion and second by Council Members Keefe and Jarriel to approve a Worker's Compensation Settlement with William Saum [as presented in **Exhibit 5**]. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

V. CITY ATTORNEY UPDATE

- Completed Settlement Agreement with William Saum; and
- Interlocal Agreement with the County of Okeechobee for storm debris removal.

VI. CITY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE

- Worked closely with County Emergency Management during Hurricane Ian;
- Thanked Staff for their dedication and work both before and after Hurricane Ian;
- Will be reviewing and updating the Emergency Management Procedures which was last done in 1994.

VII. COUNCIL COMMENTS

Council Member Chandler inquired about tree trimming along minor electrical feeder lines. Administrator Ritter responded he will contact our Florida Power and Light Representative regarding this.

Council Member Jarriel inquired if there were plans to advertise the City Charter prior to the General Election. Administrator Ritter responded yes.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further items, Mayor Watford adjourned the meeting at 7:52 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.