



**CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA**  
**DECEMBER 6, 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 December 6, 2022, at 6:00 P.M. in the City Council Chambers, located at 55 Southeast (SE) 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, Room 200, Okeechobee, Florida. The invocation was offered by Mayor Watford; followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Council Member Clark.

**II. ATTENDANCE**

Roll was taken by Deputy City Clerk Heather Prince 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- A. There were no requests for items to be added, deferred, or withdrawn from the agenda.
- B. Motion and second by Council Members Keefe and Jarriel to approve the revised agenda as presented.  
**Motion Carried Unanimously.**
- C. There were no comment cards submitted for public participation for issues not on the agenda.

**IV. CONSENT AGENDA**

- A. Motion and second by Council Members Keefe and Jarriel to [dispense with the reading and] approve the meeting Minutes for November 8, 2022, and November 15, 2022, [as presented]. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

**V. NEW BUSINESS**

- A. Ms. Connie Vanassche, of CAS Governmental Services, LLC, highlighted the City's 2023-24 Legislative Priorities, as presented with the published agenda, that will be presented at the Delegation Hearing scheduled for February 4, 2023. Appropriation Funding requests will include \$1,200,000.00 for the hardening of the Public Safety Building, \$1,200,000.00 for the hardening of City Hall, and \$412,503.00 for State Law Enforcement Radio System Equipment that is a State unfunded mandate. Issues of concern are unfunded mandates and attacks on Home Rule which further fiscally constrain our area that is designated a Rural Area of Opportunity. Our unemployment rate and poverty level are above the State averages. Seek support for the Lake Okeechobee System Operating Manual Project, the Broadband Expansion Programs, and the State's continued financial commitment to the widening of State Road (SR) 70 West to U.S. Highway 27. Request to increase or maintain State Funded Programs: Florida Department of Environmental Protection water quality grants, and Recreation Development Assistance Program grants. Florida Department of Economic Opportunity Rural Infrastructure Fund grants and Historical Preservation grants. Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Small County Outreach Program grants. Issues of financial concern are State mandated exemptions, Local Business Taxes, and Communications Services Taxes. There were no modifications made, therefore this item was for informational purposes only.
- B. City Attorney Greg Hyden reviewed the Code Enforcement Lien Process utilizing an 11-slide power point presentation [as presented in **Exhibit 1**, with a revised slide 11 and added slide 12 distributed during the meeting]. He highlighted the specifics of Florida Statute Chapter 162 as it applies, then aspects of the City's current Ordinances, and presented the Staff's recommendations for amendments to specify the criteria considered by the Special Magistrate when reviewing requests for lien reductions. This includes reducing liens to a maximum of 60 percent as well as considering the gravity of the violation, efforts towards compliance, and frequency of violations. Attorney Hyden responded to several questions posed by the Council. Following the discussion, **the Council agreed to proceed with the amendments as presented. An ordinance will be presented at a future meeting.**
- C. Motion and second by Council Members Chandler and Jarriel to approve the Termination of Grant of License with American Legion Post No. 64 regarding Veterans Square in Flagler Park [as presented in **Exhibit 2**]. For the record, it was verified that Mr. Steve Lynn of the American Legion is aware of matter and in agreement they are no longer able to maintain the Park as originally agreed; and clarified the Park would continue to be used to honor Veterans and would remain known as Veterans Memorial Square.  
**Motion Carried Unanimously.**



V. NEW BUSINESS CONTINUED

- D. Motion and second by Council Members Keefe and Clark to approve an Agreement with Kimley Horn and Associates, Inc., for Engineering Design and Bid Assistance in the amount of \$33,990.00 for the SE 4<sup>th</sup> Street Stormwater Improvement Project [as presented in **Exhibit 3**]. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**
- E. Mayor Watford explained the Board of County Commissioners had an interest in purchasing the Advanced Auto Parts property at 300 West North Park Street. The initial plan, which was part of a visionary workshop conducted thirty years ago, was to designate the property a Park to provide a view of the historic courthouse from Flagler Park. Mayor Watford expressed his support of the project/vision. Council Member Keefe made a motion to authorize Mayor Watford to send a letter of support to the County Commissioners and the Council consider including \$100,000.00 in the 2023-24 Budget to assist with this project. Motion failed for lack of a second and there was no further discussion.

VI. CITY ATTORNEY UPDATE

- Working with General Services staff regarding rezonings and re-plats;
- Researching ways to resolve on-going issues with the title of Cattlemen’s Square and the Hamrick Trust;
- Revising the food truck ordinance to match the County’s;
- Drafting stormwater ordinance;
- Planning to present fireworks ordinance at the next meeting;
- Clarified the role each attorney, has within the City.

VII. CITY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE

- Invited Council to ride on the City’s float in the Christmas Parade on Saturday, December 10, 2022;
- Santa will be visiting various sections of the City on December 13, December 14, and December 15, 2022;
- Working with architect for estimate to rehabilitate City Hall and the Public Safety Building, estimate expected to be provided soon;
- Widening of SR 70 will mostly occur outside the City but FDOT will continue to include City in all discussions;
- The Re-Bid of the Landscape Maintenance Bid was not accepted; it will be re-bid again under a new scope of services.

VIII. COUNCIL COMMENTS

Council Member Chandler thanked Staff, particularly the Code Enforcement Officers, for their hard work in making the City a better place.

Council Member Jarriel:

- Inquired about a property East of Arby’s and suggested the City consider selling it;
- Expressed desire to see an ordinance that addresses dates and timeframe for requiring property owners to remove their hurricane shutters.

Council Member Keefe:

- Expressed apologies for being unable to attend the tree lighting ceremony;
- Thanked Code Enforcement for making the City more beautiful.


Council Member Clark extended a welcome back to Chief Hagan.

Mayor Watford wished a speedy recovery to Clerk Gamiotea.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further items of discussion, Mayor Watford adjourned the meeting at 7:13 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.