



**CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA  
JANUARY 3, 2023, 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 January 3, 2023, at 6:00 P.M. in the City Council Chambers, located at 55 Southeast (SE) 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, Room 200, Okeechobee, Florida. Following a moment of silence in memory of former City employee Lola Parker, the invocation was offered by Mayor Watford; 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 A. Chandler, Monica M. Clark, Robert "Bob" J. Jarriel, and David R. McAuley.

**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- A. There were no requests for items to be added, deferred, or withdrawn from the agenda.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 Chandler and Jarriel to approve the agenda as presented.  
**Motion Carried Unanimously.**
- C. There were no comment cards submitted for public participation for issues not on the agenda.

**IV. ELECTION OF MAYOR AND VICE MAYOR**

- A. Mayor Watford opened the floor to receive nominations to serve a two-year term as Mayor as provided in Section C-2.2.C of the Charter. Motion and second by Council Members Chandler and Jarriel to re-appoint Dowling R. Watford, Jr. to serve as Mayor from January 3, 2023, through January 7, 2025.  
**Motion Carried Unanimously.**
- B. Mayor Watford opened the floor to receive nominations to serve a two-year term as Vice Mayor as provided in Section C-2.2.D of the Charter. Motion and second by Council Members Jarriel and Chandler to appoint Monica M. Clark to serve as [the first ever official] Vice Mayor from January 3, 2023, through January 7, 2025. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

**V. PRESENTATIONS AND PROCLAMATIONS**

- A. Mayor Watford presented Mr. Jonathon Crawford, accompanied by his wife, Julianna, and parents, Neal and Kristy Crawford, with a Certificate of Outstanding Achievement that was read into the record as follows: **"Whereas, the City of Okeechobee, Florida deems it befitting to honor individuals of our community who inspire others to dream, do more, and become more; and Whereas, Mr. Jonathon Crawford, was raised in Okeechobee, graduated from Okeechobee High School as a Four-Year Varsity Letterman in Baseball. He attended the University of Florida from August 2010 through December 2016, where he obtained a bachelor's degree in Family, Youth, and Community Services. From 2010 to 2013, he played baseball as a Florida Gators pitcher, and had many outstanding collegiate career achievements, including playing for the United States Collegiate National Baseball Team in the summer of 2012; and Whereas, Jonathon was selected in the first-round of the 2013 Major League Baseball Draft by the Detroit Tigers, debuting that season with the Connecticut Tigers. He has gone on to play for the West Michigan Whitecaps, the Cincinnati Reds, the Arizona Complex League Reds, the Daytona Tortugas, the Chicago Dogs of the American Association of Professional Baseball, and the High Point Rockers of the Atlantic League of Professional Baseball; and Whereas, As testament of Jonathon's dedication to the game of baseball and his fortitude to recover from multiple injuries, in 2020 during the height of the COVID-19 global pandemic, he signed on to play for Team Texas of the Constellation Energy League, a makeshift four-team independent league formed as a way to create playing opportunities for minor and major league baseball players that were limited due to the travel restrictions during the pandemic. Now, Therefore, I, Dowling R. Watford, Jr., by virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of the City of Okeechobee, proudly recognize Jonathon's academic and athletic achievements. May he, along with his younger brother Kutter, continue to serve as mentors and leaders for the youth of our community."**



V. PRESENTATIONS AND PROCLAMATIONS CONTINUED

B. Mayor Watford presented Mr. Kutter Crawford, accompanied by his parents, Neal and Kristy Crawford, with a Certificate of Outstanding Achievement that was read into the record as follows: **"Whereas, the City of Okeechobee, Florida deems it befitting to honor individuals of our community who inspire others to dream, do more, and become more; and Whereas, Mr. Kutter Crawford, was raised in Okeechobee, graduated from Okeechobee High School as a Four-Year Varsity Letterman in Baseball and Golf. His collegiate career began in 2015 at Indian River State College where he also played baseball his Freshman and Sophomore years. He then transferred to Florida Gulf Coast University, where he completed his bachelor's degree in December 2019, and played his Junior year as a pitcher for the FGCU Eagles. He had several outstanding collegiate baseball career achievements during his Junior year, most notably being named the Atlantic Sun Pitcher of the Week in March of 2017; and Whereas, Kutter was selected in the sixteenth-round of the 2017 Major League Baseball Draft by the Boston Red Sox and made his professional pitching debut with the Lowell Spinners of the New York-Penn League. He has since gone on to play for the Greenville Drive, the Salem Red Sox, Portland Seadogs, Worcester Red Sox, and the Dominican Professional Baseball League during the off-season. In 2021 he was the recipient of the Red Sox' Lou Gorman Award, and in 2022 the Boston Red Sox added Kutter to their rosters to start the 2022 baseball season. Now, Therefore, I, Dowling R. Watford, Jr., by virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of the City of Okeechobee, proudly recognize Kutter's academic and athletic achievements, and wish him continued success as a professional baseball pitcher. May he, along with his older brother Jonathon, continue to serve as mentors and leaders for the youth of our community."**

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. As revised from the December 20, 2022, meeting and presented in **Exhibit 1**, proposed Ordinance No. 1270, amending Chapter 14 Businesses, Section 14-173 Fireworks and Chapter 30 Environment, Section 30-43 Public Nuisances of the Code of Ordinances was discussed. The revised language provides for fireworks to be allowed on New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, and Independence Day. However, any public display requires a permit as well as approval from the Okeechobee County Fire Rescue. **This version will be revised further to address editorial amendments. Section 2, paragraph (b) add "additional insured" after financial bond requirements; and paragraph (d) add "public safety or public nuisance" before problem in the last sentence. This will allow Police and Code Enforcement Officers to have more discretionary authority. The Temporary Use Permits sections of the current Code will be reviewed to ensure consistency with the proposed Ordinance.** The final version should be ready for a first reading at the next meeting.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Two-year appointments for the Mayor, Vice Mayor, Council Members or Staff to serve as a Liaison on the behalf of the City to various boards and committees [as presented in **Exhibit 2**], were approved as follows:
1. Central Florida Regional Planning Council: Regular Council Member Chandler, Alternate Council Member Jarriel.
  2. Treasure Coast Regional League of Cities: Regular Council Member McAuley, Alternate Council Member Chandler.
  3. Treasure Coast Council of Local Governments: Regular Mayor Watford, Alternate Council Member Chandler.
  4. Okeechobee County Healthy Start Coalition: Vice Mayor Clark.
  5. Okeechobee Tourism Development Council: Vice Mayor Clark and Council Member Jarriel.
  6. Okeechobee Main Street: Council Member McAuley.
  7. Okeechobee County Juvenile Justice Council: Mayor Watford.
  8. Okeechobee Historical Society: Mayor Watford.
  9. Battle of Okeechobee Re-enactment Committee: Mayor Watford.
  10. Chamber of Commerce: Public Works Director Allen.
- B. Motion and second by Council Member Jarriel and Vice Mayor Clark to approve a letter of support on behalf of Indian River State College (IRSC) and its local partners to seek a public land transfer from the Florida State School for Boys to the IRSC District Board of Trustees [as presented in **Exhibit 3**]. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

VIII. CITY ATTORNEY UPDATE

- Working on amendments to proposed Ordinance No. 1270;
- The Cell Tower Special Exception (No. 22-003-SE) will be brought before the Council at the February 7, 2023, meeting.

**IX. CITY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE**

- Will be presenting a report for goals and objectives for 2023 and five-year projections and projects at a future meeting;
- Review upcoming Council meeting dates for 2023 to discuss at a future Council meeting;
- Excitedly read an email from Representative Greg Steube's office announcing the awarding of a grant in the amount of \$660,000.00 to begin improvements on City Hall.

**X. COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Council Member Chandler offered congratulations and welcome to Council Member McAuley.

Council Member Jarriel expressed his pride in the difference the Council has made during his previous term.

Council Member McAuley conveyed his excitement in being a part of the Council, asking for prayers and patience as he learns.

Vice Mayor Clark announced the Healthy Start Coalition was able to service 430 children at Christmas due to the support of the community.

**XI. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further items of discussion, Mayor Watford adjourned the meeting at 6:46 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.