



CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA
FEBRUARY 21, 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 February 21, 2023, at 6:00 P.M. in the City Council Chambers, located at 55 Southeast (SE) 3rd Avenue, Room 200, Okeechobee, Florida. The invocation was offered by Mayor Watford; followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Council Member McAuley.

II. ATTENDANCE

Roll was taken by City Clerk Lane Gamiotea to establish a quorum. Members present: Mayor Dowling R. Watford, Jr., Vice Mayor Monica M. Clark, Council Members Noel A. Chandler, 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- A. There were no requests for items to be added, deferred, or withdrawn from the agenda.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 Jarriel and McAuley to approve the agenda as presented.
Motion Carried Unanimously.
- C. One comment card was submitted by Mr. Jeff Sumner, Economic Council of Okeechobee, introducing their new Executive Director, Ms. Lyndsey Sheppard, to the Council.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

Motion and second by Council Members Chandler and Jarriel to approve the following consent items:

- A. January 2023 Warrant Register [in the amounts: General Fund, \$3,775,903.13; Public Facilities Improvement Fund, \$39,643.77; and Appropriations Grant Fund, \$675.00; as presented]; and
- B. Reappoint Mr. Steve Nelson as a Regular Member to the Okeechobee Utility Authority (OUA) Board of Directors, term being March 2, 2023, through March 1, 2027 [as presented in **Exhibit 2**].
Motion Carried Unanimously.

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- A. Motion and second by Council Member Jarriel and Vice Mayor Clark to direct the City Attorney to prepare options for a Tax Abatement Program. **Motion Carried three to two, Mayor Watford and Council Member Chandler voting No.**

VI. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Motion and second by Council Members Jarriel and McAuley to adopt Resolution No. 2023-01, regarding the 2023 Regular Council Meeting dates, times, and locations [as presented in **Exhibit 2**].

City Attorney Fumero read into the record the title of proposed Resolution No. 2023-01 as follows: **"A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA; ADOPTING, CONFIRMING, AND RATIFYING THE SCHEDULE OF REGULAR MEETINGS FOR 2023 IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CITY CHARTER; PROVIDING FOR AMENDMENT OR REPEAL BY MAJORITY VOTE OF THE CITY COUNCIL; AND PROVIDING FOR THE REPEAL OF CONFLICTING PROVISIONS; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE."** **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

- B. A discussion was held regarding mandatory utility connections as discussed at the January 26, 2023, Joint Workshop conducted with the Council, Board of County Commission (BOCC) and OUA Board of Directors. Mr. John Hayford, OUA Executive Director, along with Mr. Steve Nelson and Mr. Tommy Clay, (City-appointed OUA Board Members) and Member Harry Moldenhauer, were present to provide information and answer questions. The timeline for requiring the connections and options for making the connection affordable for citizens was discussed. A copy of Florida Statute 381.00655 was distributed for reference and has been incorporated into the official minute file. **There was a unanimous consensus from the Council to instruct the City Attorney to draft an ordinance to amend the Code of Ordinances Section 58-72, mandating water and wastewater connections, these proposed changes will be conducted in coordination with proposed amendments being considered by the BOCC, for consistency between both entities.**

VII. CITY ATTORNEY UPDATE

- Finalizing the revisions for amendments to the Code of Ordinances due to the new Charter;
- Stormwater ordinance has been provided to Public Works for a final review;
- Continuing to work to resolve the on-going stormwater and drainage issues in Commerce Center;
- Will begin researching options for a Tax Abatement Program and drafting an ordinance to address mandatory connections.

VIII. CITY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE

- Working on a Food Truck Ordinance;
- Town Hall Meeting scheduled for March 21, 2023, will be informal with a meet and greet and refreshments, followed by the inaugural State of the City Address;
- Work on the landscape for the endcaps along South Park Street scheduled to be finished by next week, Ribbon Cutting Ceremony to be scheduled;
- Okeechobee Cattlemen's Rodeo is scheduled for 2:30 P.M. on March 11 through 12, 2023, Council Members who plan to participate need to respond to emailed invitation;
- Mayor Watford will be participating in the Battle of Okeechobee Re-enactment on February 25 through 26, 2023;
- Potential development to the East of RaceTrac.

IX. COUNCIL COMMENTS

Council Member Chandler noted he was pleased to see Public Works replacing the flags within in Flagler Park.

Council Member Jarriel shared his pride in the growth occurring in the City and County.

Council Member McAuley provided an update regarding House Bill 401 and the potential impact it would have on the City.

Vice Mayor Clark noted she has a difficult time finding tenants for her commercial rental properties due to its lack of OUA wastewater connection, expanding the system and making it affordable to connect will be a benefit.

X. ADJOURNMENT

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



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.