



CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA
MARCH 7, 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 March 7, 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 Pastor Warren Kelly of Okeechobee Praise and Worship Center; followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Vice Mayor Clark.

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, and David R. McAuley. Council Member Robert "Bob" J. Jarriel entered the Chambers at 6:04 P.M.

III. AGENDA AND PUBLIC COMMENTS

A. Under VI. New Business, two items were added. Item D., Exhibit 4, a letter of support to the Okeechobee County Economic Development Corporation, and Item E., Exhibit 5, a letter to Florida Legislature opposing House Bill (HB) 410 and Senate Bill (SB) 604.

B. Motion and second by Council Member Chandler and Vice Mayor Clark to approve the agenda as amended. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

C. One comment card was submitted by Mr. Steve Dobbs, of New Lines/Steve Dobbs Engineering, introducing their new employee, Ms. Jennifer Busbin, who is retiring from the County Community Development office next week.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Motion and second by Council Members Chandler and Jarriel to dispense with the reading and approve the January 26, 2023, February 7, 2023, and February 21, 2023, Minutes [as presented]. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

V. MAYOR WATFORD OPENED THE PUBLIC HEARING AT 6:06 P.M.

A. Motion and second by Council Members McAuley and Jarriel to read by title only, proposed Ordinance No. 1270, regulating the use of fireworks and expanding enforcement of illegal use [as presented in Exhibit 1]. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

City Attorney Greg Hyden read into the record the title of proposed Ordinance No. 1270 as follows: **"AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA RELATING TO THE REGULATION OF FIREWORKS, AMENDING PART II THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE AT CHAPTER 14 BUSINESSES BY SPECIFICALLY AMENDING SECTION 14-173 FIREWORKS; AMENDING AT CHAPTER 30, ENVIRONMENT, SPECIFICALLY AMENDING SECTION 30-43 PUBLIC NUISANCES; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; REPEALING ALL ORDINANCES OR PARTS OF ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT HEREWITH; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE."**

Motion and second by Vice Mayor Clark and Council Member Jarriel to adopt proposed Ordinance No. 1270. There were no comments from the public. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

MAYOR WATFORD CLOSED THE PUBLIC HEARING AT 6:09 P.M.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Motion and second by Council Members Jarriel and Chandler to approve a transfer of land [to the City] for a [portion of a] sidewalk from the Brahman Car Wash [by the property owner, Williamson Cattle Company, Inc., by Quit Claim Deed, located at 1612 South (S) Parrott Avenue. Legal Description: a parcel of land lying in a portion of Lot 6, Block 29, FIRST ADDITION TO SOUTH OKEECHOBEE, according to the plat thereof recorded in Plat Book 1, Page 17, Public Records of Okeechobee County, Florida, described as follows: Beginning at the SE Corner of Lot 6; thence N89°56'07"W, along the North (N) right-of-way (ROW) line of Southwest 17th Street, a distance of 31.00-feet (FT); thence N80°53'51"E, a distance of 31.38-FT to the West (W) ROW line of U.S. Highway 441 (a/k/a Parrott Avenue); thence S00°07'24"E, along said W ROW line, a distance of 5.00-FT to the Point of Beginning, as presented in Exhibit 2]. It was noted for the record that Exhibit A, Sheet 1 of 2 attached to the Quit Claim Deed, is labeled incorrectly as Sketch of Description Okeechobee Agri-Civic Center, will be corrected to read Sketch of Description Williamson Cattle Company. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

VI. NEW BUSINESS CONTINUED

- B. Motion and second by Council Members Chandler and McAuley to read by title only, proposed Ordinance No. 1271, updating the Five-Year Schedule of Capital Improvements to the Comprehensive Plan [as presented in **Exhibit 3**]. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

City Attorney Hyden read into the record the title of proposed Ordinance No. 1271, as follows: "**AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA, UPDATING THE FIVE-YEAR SCHEDULE OF CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS OF THE CITY'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AS MANDATED BY FLORIDA STATUTES SECTION 163.3177(3)(b); PROVIDING FOR CONFLICT, PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**"

Motion and second by Vice Mayor Clark and Council Member Jarriel to approve the first reading and set April 4, 2023, as the final public hearing date for proposed Ordinance No. 1271.

Planner Ben Smith, attending electronically via Zoom, presented the Planning Staff findings. There were no public comments. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

- C. Ms. Sharie Turgeon, Executive Director of Okeechobee Main Street (OKMS), and Ms. Magi Cable, President of Okeechobee Historical Society (OHS), made a presentation regarding their interest in placing historic signs along S Park Street. The intent is to identify buildings with historical significance by adding informational signs to the existing lampposts. Ms. Cable clarified this was not intended to be a large-scale project or to place the buildings on any historical registries. A drawing of the buildings with historical significance was displayed, along with an example of the signage. A copy of these items has been incorporated into the official minute file. Administrator Ritter and Attorney Hyden advised to allow such signs would require amendments to the existing sign regulations within the Code of Ordinances. Following a discussion, motion and second made by Council Members Jarriel and McAuley to allow OKMS and OHS to place historic signage in the area designated in the 1999 Proposed Historical District Study. It was clarified, the motion was to allow the concept so it could be developed further, while revisions to the sign regulations could be adopted. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**
- D. Item Added. Motion and second by Vice Mayor Clark and Council Member Chandler to approve [and authorize Mayor Watford to execute a] letter of support to Okeechobee County Economic Development Corporation to partner with Enterprise Florida's Retail Recruitment program [as presented in **Exhibit 4**]. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**
- E. Item Added. Motion and second by Council Members McAuley and Jarriel to approve [and authorize Mayor Watford to execute] letters to Senator Erin Grall and Representative Kaylee Tuck, not supporting the passage of HB401 and SB604 which would essentially increase municipalities' sovereign immunity liability [as presented in **Exhibit 5**]. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

VII. CITY ATTORNEY UPDATE

- Work on lease agreement for Cattlemen's Square, FLAGLER PARK, is progressing;
- Opinion issued on documentation needed for piggyback agreements;
- Working on a new plat for the Katie Edwards site;
- Reviewing the Community Development Block Grant-Housing Program liens;
- Continuing to review amendments needed to the Code of Ordinances related to the new Charter;
- Planning Board Workshop scheduled for March 16, 2023, to discuss proposed changes in the Code regarding food trucks;
- Work is progressing on other proposed ordinances, including hurricane shutters, stormwater, mandatory sewer hook-up, matrix for lien reductions, and environmental matters regarding the Commerce Center.

VIII. CITY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE

- Shared an update from Mr. Russ Brown, of Indian River State College, regarding their request to lease a portion of the property at the former boys' school [located at 7200 N Parrott Avenue], HB1603 is in progress addressing the request;
- Has received multiple phone calls and emails from property owners and developers expressing interest in how the potential tax abatement program could apply to future developments;
- Reminded all to attend the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony, celebrating the completion of the S Park Street landscaping project, on March 15, 2023, at Noon;
- Reminded all about the Town Hall Meeting scheduled for March 21, 2023, at 6:00 P.M. that will include a pinning ceremony for sworn Police employees.

IX. COUNCIL COMMENTS

Council Member Chandler confirmed he needed to arrive at the rodeo grounds by 2:00 P.M. for the Grand Entry at the Okeechobee Cattlemen's Rodeo on March 11 and 12, 2023.

Council Member Jarriel

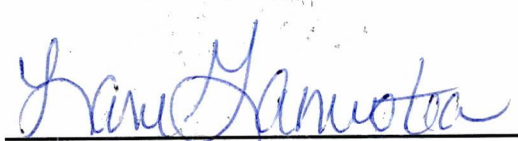
- Complimented the landscaping at the new Brahman Car Wash; and
- Encouraged others to promote the Town Hall Meeting.

Council Member McAuley suggested each Council Member send their own letter to the Florida Legislature opposing HB401/SB604.

X. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further items of discussion, Mayor Watford adjourned the meeting at 6:42 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.