



CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA
OCTOBER 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 October 10, 2023, 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 Joe Bishop, Chaplain, Okeechobee County Sheriff's Office; followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Council Member Chandler. A moment of silence was held in memory of City Police Officer Jason Chapman who lost his life in an off-duty motor vehicle accident.

II. ATTENDANCE

City Clerk Lane Gamiotea called the roll. Members present to establish a quorum: Mayor Dowling R. Watford, Jr., Vice Mayor Monica M. Clark, and Council Members Noel A. Chandler, Robert "Bob" J. Jarriel, and David R. McAuley.

III. AGENDA AND PUBLIC COMMENTS

- A. New Business, item V.B, was amended to read award a Bid rather than Contract.
- B. Motion and second by Council Members Jarriel and McAuley 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. PRESENTATIONS AND PROCLAMATIONS

- A. Mayor Watford proclaimed October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month. The Proclamation was presented to Ms. Monica Branch, Ms. Sally Savage, and Ms. Tina Taylor, representing Martha's House, and read into the record as follows: **"Whereas, domestic violence is a crime threatening the safety and lives of women, men, teenagers, and children, directly or through the traumatic experience of living with it at home; and Whereas, victims of domestic violence are found in every race, culture, and socioeconomic strata and the cost to our community in lost time at work, increased emergency services, missed days of school, increased medical bills, and other economic and social costs makes domestic violence a community health issue; and Whereas, the City of Okeechobee is taking a proactive stance to counter domestic violence through partnerships between Martha's House, Okeechobee's only certified domestic violence center, law enforcement, school programs, and more; and Whereas, in the past year, Martha's House has provided emergency services to more than 790 residents, including over 4,650 bed nights in shelter, 800 hotline calls, 670 safety plans, 9,400 meals served, and \$17,000.00 in direct financial assistance to local victims; and Whereas, the President of the United States and Congress as well as other Federal agencies have expressed a commitment to eliminating domestic violence both nationally and internationally. Now, Therefore, I, Dowling R. Watford, Jr., by virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of the City of Okeechobee, Florida, do hereby proclaim October 2023 as Domestic Violence Awareness Month in the City of Okeechobee in recognition of the important work done by Domestic Violence Programs and victims' service providers. I urge all citizens to actively participate in the scheduled activities and programs sponsored by Martha's House of Okeechobee and other community organizations to work toward the elimination of personal and institutional violence against women and girls."**
- B. Mayor Watford proclaimed the week of October 2 through 8, 2023, as Florida Climate Week. The Proclamation, which will be mailed to the VoLo Foundation, reads as follows: **"Whereas, the Climate Change 2023: Synthesis Report, listed a current temperature rise of 1.1 degrees Celsius leading to constant unnatural weather events bringing disarray to the planet and its inhabitants, and it reports an increase in weather-related disasters with every rise in temperature level; and Whereas, Florida and its 825 miles of shoreline and low elevation points of 100-feet above sea level make the State highly susceptible to sea-level rise and other natural disasters related to climate change, and the high level of carbon dioxide; and pollution also threatens to harm Florida's coral reefs and a variety of sea organisms; and Whereas, VoLo Foundation, along with other non-profit organizations, local, state, and federal partners, elected leaders, news media, volunteer and professional associations, is committed to educating Florida citizens and visitors about the climate crisis so they may take action to bring about positive, influential change to protect their families, business, and themselves; and Whereas, the citizens of Florida are encouraged to become more aware of our changing climate and participate in the various programs during Florida Climate Week that will present and discuss solutions by visiting Florida Climate Week.com. Now, Therefore, I, Dowling R. Watford, Jr., by virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of the City of Okeechobee, Florida, do hereby proclaim the week of October 2 through 8, 2023, as FloridaClimateWeek in the City of Okeechobee."**

V. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Motion by Vice Mayor Clark, second by Council Member Chandler to approve an Agreement [No. P4196B under Awarded Contract RFQ No. ADM-01-32-07-21] in the amount of \$95,424.00 to Craig A. Smith and Associates for the construction oversight and certification of the dry retention areas and remaining lake segment of the Commerce Center as recently permitted by the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) under the new Permit No 47-108440-P [as presented in **Exhibit 1**].

Motion Carried Unanimously.

- B. Motion and second by Council Members Chandler and McAuley to award a Bid to B and B Site Development, Inc., based on the recommendation of Craig A. Smith and Associates, to construct additional dry retention areas and lake segment at the Commerce Center in the amount of \$465,170.97 [as presented in **Exhibit 2**, related to SFWMD Permit No. 47-108440-P].

Motion Carried Unanimously.

- C. Motion by Council Member Jarriel, second by Vice Mayor Clark to approve [under RFQ No. ADM-01-00-10-19] the Legal Services Agreement with Nason, Yeager, Gerson, Harris and Fumero, P.A. in the amount of \$9,900.00 per month or \$118,800.00 annually, as outlined in the Scope of Work [as presented in **Exhibit 3**, effective October 1, 2023, and replaces the January 1, 2020, Contract and Amendment No. 1, effective May 1, 2020].

Motion Carried Unanimously.

VI. CITY ATTORNEY UPDATE

- Nothing new since September 25, 2023, update.

VII. CITY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE

- The Legislative Delegation is meeting at the County Historic Courthouse/Commission Chambers on October 4, 2023, at 3:30 P.M. Mayor Watford will be presenting the City's requests. Council Member McAuley will be presenting on behalf of the Treasure Coast Regional League of Cities.
- As requested, a form is now available for metal detecting on City property.
- Funeral Service for Officer Jason Chapman is 11:00 A.M., October 4, 2023, at Oakview Church.

VIII. COUNCIL COMMENTS

Council Member Chandler stated he is glad to be back from his trip.

Council Member Jarriel is pleased to see what the City has accomplished.

Vice Mayor Clark expressed appreciation for the prayers and words of encouragement for her daughter.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further items of discussion, Mayor Watford adjourned the meeting at 6:39 P.M.

Submitted By:



Lane Gamiotea, CMC, City Clerk