



CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA
JANUARY 16, 2024, 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 16, 2024, at 6:00 P.M. in the City Council Chambers, located at 55 Southeast (SE) 3rd Avenue (AVE), Room 200, Okeechobee, Florida. The invocation was offered by Pastor Don Hanna, First United Methodist Church; followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Mayor Watford.

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, and David R. McAuley. Council Member Robert "Bob" Jarriel was absent with consent.

III. AGENDA AND PUBLIC COMMENTS

A. There were no requests for items to be added, deferred, or withdrawn from the agenda. However, the motion provided for New Business Item "C." was modified due to not receiving a written response from the bidder.

B. Motion and second by Council Members Chandler and McAuley to approve the agenda as published.
Motion Carried.

C. There were no comment cards submitted for public participation for issues not on the agenda.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by Council Member Chandler, second by Vice Mayor Clark to:

A. Dispense with the reading and approve the Minutes for January 2, 2024, [as presented in **Exhibit 1**]; and

B. Approve the December 2023 Warrant Register [in the amounts: General Fund, \$477,220.53; Public Facilities Improvement Fund, \$43,555.33; Community Development Block Grant Fund, \$10,324.97; Industrial Development Grant Fund, \$7,725.00; Capital Improvement Projects Fund, \$3,757.49; and Appropriations Grant Fund, \$675.00; as presented in **Exhibit 2**].

Motion Carried.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Motion by Vice Mayor Clark, second by Council Member McAuley to read by title only, proposed Ordinance No. 1283, regarding Rezoning Petition No. 23-002-R submitted by Jay Patel on behalf of the property owner, Jitendra Living Trust, to rezone 0.65+/- acres located at 201 South (S) Parrott AVE, from Central Business District (CBD) to Heavy Commercial (CHV) for the purpose of expanding the existing Budget Inn Motel [as presented in **Exhibit 3**].

Motion Carried.

City Attorney John Fumero read into the record the title of proposed Ordinance No. 1283 as follows: **"AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA; AMENDING THE OFFICIAL ZONING MAP OF THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE BY REZONING A CERTAIN TRACT OF LAND MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED HEREIN, FROM CBD TO CHV PETITION NO. 23-002-R; AMENDING THE ZONING MAP ACCORDINGLY; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICT; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE."**

Motion by Vice Mayor Clark, second by Council Member McAuley to approve the first reading and set February 20, 2024, as the final Public Hearing date for proposed Ordinance No. 1283. Planner Ben Smith, of Morris-Depew Associates, Inc., 2914 Cleveland AVE, Fort Myers, FL 33901, attending electronically via Zoom, presented the Planning Staff Report which finds the request is reasonably compatible with adjacent uses, even with the non-conforming use and structure; and is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. Planning Staff and Planning Board recommend approval. Mayor Watford advised the applicant's representative to convey the complexity of correcting the non-conforming issues, especially the existing structures and parking, before the Technical Review Committee could approve any expansion of the motel. **Roll Call Vote: Chandler-Yea, Clark-Yea, Jarriel-Absent, McAuley-Yea, Watford-Yea.**

Motion Carried.

V. NEW BUSINESS CONTINUED

- B.** Motion and second by Council Members Chandler and McAuley to approve a [second] extension of a Lease Agreement with the Chamber of Commerce [for the premises and structures located at 55 S Parrott AVE, the West half of Block R of FLAGLER PARK, OKEECHOBEE, Plat Book 5, Page 5, Okeechobee County public record] until September 30, 2028 [as presented in **Exhibit 4**].

Motion Carried.

- C.** Motion and second by Council Members Chandler and McAuley to award a contract [in the amount of \$880,825.96, and not to exceed \$905,825.96 to include potential material overages] contingent upon the bidder responding within 45-days of January 3, 2024, to extend the bid offer beyond the original 90-days for Bid No. PW 06-10-08-23 Southwest 5th AVE Improvements to Ranger Construction Industries [as presented in **Exhibit 5**] the City was awarded \$334,951.00 from a Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Small County Outreach Program Grant No. G1A84 for this project.

Motion Carried.

VI. CITY ATTORNEY UPDATE

- Continuing to work with City Administrator on the hardening grant for City Hall.
- Responding to issues regarding the Commerce Center.
- Finalized the lease extension for the Chamber of Commerce.
- Research for the Firefighters' Pension Fund and Police Officers' Pension Trust Fund merger.
- The Memorandum of Understanding with Freedom Baptist Church to address maintenance and insurance issues related to their use of City property for overflow parking is progressing.

VII. CITY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE

- FDOT road resurfacing and curb work will begin this month along North Park Street from Parrott AVE past the City Limits (East 13th AVE), to SE 17th AVE.
- Working with the Economic Development Corporation to publish a six to eight-page article featuring the City in Business View Magazine, and an interview with the Mayor.

VIII. COUNCIL COMMENTS

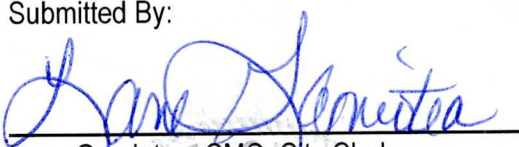
Council Members Chandler and McAuley advised they will be absent from the next meeting, February 6, 2024.

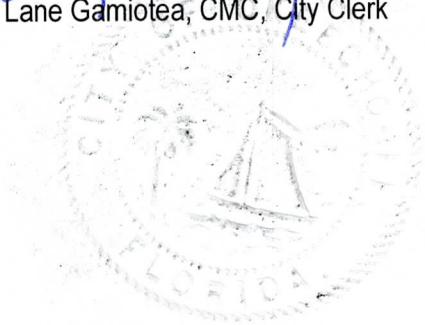
Mayor Watford noted the reason for Council Member Jarriel's absence tonight may be because he was performing his South Florida Fair Board Member duties by attending the Fair in Palm Beach County.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further items of discussion, Mayor Watford adjourned the meeting at 6:41 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.