



**CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA
DECEMBER 7, 2021, REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING
OFFICIAL MEETING MINUTES**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Watford called the regular meeting of the City Council for the City of Okeechobee to order on December 7, 2021, 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 Chad Keathley of the Okeechobee Church of God, 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 Chandler, Monica Clark, Bob Jarriel, and Bobby Keefe.

III. AGENDA AND PUBLIC COMMENTS

A. Mayor Watford asked whether there were any agenda items to be added, deferred, or withdrawn. Public Hearing item B, adopting proposed Ordinance No. 1245 was withdrawn.

B. Motion by Council Member Keefe, seconded by Council Member Clark 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. CONSENT AGENDA.

Motion by Council Member Keefe, seconded by Council Member Jarriel to:

A. Approve the October 26, 2021 minutes;

B. Approve a Temporary Street Closing Application submitted by Okeechobee Main Street to close SW 3rd Avenue and SW 4th Avenue from 5:00 p.m. on December 10, 2021 to December 11, 2021 at 10:00 p.m. for the Annual Christmas Festival [as presented in **Exhibit 1**]; and

C. Approve the of disposal of obsolete or surplus police equipment [as presented in **Exhibit 2**].

Motion Carried Unanimously.

V. MAYOR WATFORD OPENED THE PUBLIC HEARING AT 6:05 P.M.

A. A motion was made by Council Member Jarriel, to read by title only, proposed Ordinance No. 1235, amending the Comprehensive Plan regarding Application No. 21-002-CPA [as presented in **Exhibit 3**]; seconded by Council Member Clark. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

Attorney Fumero read proposed Ordinance No. 1235 as follows: **"AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA; AMENDING THE CITY'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN; ADDING A PROPERTY RIGHTS ELEMENT INCLUDING A GOAL, OBJECTIVE AND POLICIES, INCLUDING STATEMENTS OF PROPERTY RIGHTS AS PROVIDED IN FLORIDA STATUTES 163.3177(6), AS REQUIRED BY RECENTLY ADOPTED FLORIDA HOUSE BILL 59; PROVIDING FOR FINDINGS OF FACT; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICT; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE."**

A motion was made by Council Member Clark, seconded by Council Member Keefe to adopt proposed Ordinance No. 1235. There were no public comments, Planner LaRue reviewed the Planning Staff Report findings and the favorable results of the reviews from the Department of Economic Opportunity and other appropriate agencies. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

B. Motion to read by title only, proposed Ordinance No. 1245, regarding Rezoning Petition No. 21-001-R submitted by Blue Springs Holdings, LLC, to rezone from Holding, 16.8 acres to Heavy Commercial and 38.0 acres to Residential Multiple Family (Exhibit 4) was withdrawn from the agenda. The petition will have to be corrected and resubmitted to the Planning Board.

MAYOR WATFORD CLOSED THE PUBLIC HEARING AT 6:19 P.M.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Mr. Frank Irby and Executive Director Kaylee King of the Okeechobee Economic Development Corporation provided a presentation and quarterly update which consisted of their mission statement, purpose, and currently membership. Activity from July to September 2021 included finalized design of entryway enhancement project; supported local business expansions, promoted the October 13th Lake and Trail groundbreaking ceremony; explored Space Florida opportunities; executed Phase 1 of the Business Retention and Expansion Program Implementation Plan; coordinated a site visit with an industrial prospect; sponsored the "employable skills" summer camp; facilitated five new prospective businesses; the Business Manager completed their Basic Economic Development Course certification.

VII. NEW BUSINESS CONTINUED

- A. Continued: Mrs. King was appointed by the County to the CareerSource Heartland Board, as well as joining the Indian River State College Workforce Development Campaign and the Florida Economic Development Council Association; sponsored the annual Florida Rural Economic Development Association Summit; partnered with South Florida Water Management on Project Lightning, submitted local bill with appropriations request and economic impact statement; attended over 37 business meetings and three speaking engagements, there are five new and 11 active projects. Mr. Irby thanked the Council for their support. There was no action required.
- B. Provided in Exhibit 6 were items for discussion from the Okeechobee Utility Authority (OUA) Work Group of which Mayor Watford and Council Member Clark represent the City. Mr. Terry Boroughs, Chairperson for the Board of County Commission and OUA Chairperson John Creasman were present to assist with the discussion. These issues cannot be decided at this meeting and would be required to be formalized into an amendment to the current agreement. The first proposed amendment is the recommendation to remove of the super majority vote requirement and replace it with verbiage indicating a simple majority. **The consensus of the Council was to approve this amendment.** The second amendment would provide for an elected official from the City Council and County Commission to serve on the OUA Board. **A consensus was not reached,** Council Members Clark and Chandler were not in favor of this, Mayor Watford liked this idea and Council Member Keefe noted he was leaning towards agreeing to this. The third and final amendment was in regards to the Glades County resident appointee. The following was the recommended change: the four members of the Authority Board appointed by the County and the City shall then, by a simple majority vote, appoint a fifth member of the Authority Board and one alternate representative who may attend all meetings of the Authority Board and shall have the authority to vote in the absence of said fifth member; provided, however, for so long as the district encompasses a portion of Glades County, said fifth member and the alternate for that member shall be a resident of that area within the District located in Glades County. If a vacancy should occur, applicants of that area within the District located in Glades County will be given preferential consideration. If no one within the District located in Glades County applies, then the vacancy shall be filled with the next viable candidate residing in the OUA Service Area. **A consensus was not reached,** Council Member Clark and Keefe were in favor of the recommendation, Mayor Watford, Council Members Chandler, and Jarriel were not. These proposed amendments will be presented to the County Commission and City Council at a future meeting for final consideration and official vote.

VIII. CITY ATTORNEY UPDATE

Attorney Fumero provided an update on the interlocal agreement language regarding the new County jail that would keep the City updated on the project.

IX. CITY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE

Administrator Ritter stated that representatives from BIS will be at City Hall on Wednesday December 8, 2021, to test their equipment with online representatives from eSCRIBE, who will provide training for staff. The Flagler Park design continues to move forward with the conceptual plans for the rest of the blocks and landscape designs for Park Street forthcoming. He commended Staff's hard work and long hours in the offices within his six months of employment at the City. He reminded the Council to participate in riding on the City float for the Okeechobee Main Street Christmas Festival and Parade this Saturday. City Santa will continue the annual tradition of riding through the neighborhoods on December 16, 17, and 18, 2021.

IX. COUNCIL COMMENTS

Council Member Clark stated that tree lighting ceremony was outstanding. Clerk Gamiotea responded that a date has not been set for the January Town Hall Meeting when inquired by Council Member Jarriel. Council Member Keefe asked for the status on the Primitive Baptist Church property sale and was advised that would take place in January. The issue of the Future Land Use Map and scheduling a workshop between the Planning Board and City Council was discussed with Administrator Ritter, advising that the Request for Qualifications for Planning Services were due December 17, 2021, once the City Council enters into a contract the workshop can be scheduled.

X. ADJOURN, Mayor Watford adjourned the meeting at 7:03 P.M.

Submitted By:


Lane Gamiotea, CMC, City Clerk 12-21-2021

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.

*Form 8B Memorandum of Voting Conflict for County, Municipal, and other Local Public Officers was filed by Council Member Clark on November 16, 2021, in the Office of the City Clerk and made part of the official record filed in the permanent minute file for this meeting.