



CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA
JANUARY 18, 2022, 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 January 18, 2022, 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 Mayor Watford, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Council Member Keefe.

II. ATTENDANCE

Roll was taken by City Clerk Lane Gamiotea to establish a quorum. Members present: Mayor Dowling R. Watford, Jr., Council Members Noel A. Chandler, Monica M. Clark, Robert "Bob" Jarriel, and Robert "Bobby" Keefe, Jr.

III. AGENDA AND PUBLIC COMMENTS

A. Mayor Watford asked whether there were any agenda items to be added, deferred, or withdrawn. New Business Item "C," was added.

B. Motion by Council Member Keefe, seconded by Council Member Clark to approve the agenda as amended.
Motion Carried Unanimously.

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

IV. PRESENTATIONS AND PROCLAMTIONS

A. Police Officer Brandon Greisemer, accompanied by his wife and daughter, was recognized by Mayor Watford and Police Chief Donald Hagan for his years of service. He was presented with a Cross Pen featuring his name engraved and a framed certificate, which read **"In recognition of your five years of service, hard work, and dedication to the City, its citizens and your fellow employees from January 4, 2017, through January 4, 2022."**

V. CONSENT AGENDA

Motion and second by Council Members Jarriel and Clark to:

A. [Dispensed with the reading and] approve the meeting minutes for December 21, 2021 [as presented].

B. Approve the Warrant Register for December 2021 [in the amounts: General Fund, \$517,107.37; Public Facilities Improvement Fund, \$14,196.40; and Capital Improvement Projects Fund, \$13,361.72, as presented]. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

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

A. Motion and second by Council Members Clark and Keefe to read by title only, proposed Ordinance No.1231, closing the alleyway in Block 110, CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, Abandonment of Right-of-Way Petition No. 21-001-AC [as presented in Exhibit 1]. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

City Attorney John Fumero read proposed Ordinance No.1231 by title only as follows: **"AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA; VACATING AND ABANDONING CERTAIN RIGHTS-OF-WAY BEING AN UNIMPROVED PORTION OF AN ALLEYWAY LYING WITHIN BLOCK 110, CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, ACCORDING TO THE PLAT THEREOF AS RECORDED IN PLAT BOOK 5, PAGE 5, PUBLIC RECORDS OF OKEECHOBEE COUNTY, FLORIDA PETITION NO. 21-001-AC; RESERVING UNTO THE CITY, ITS SUCCESSORS AND ASSIGNS A NON-EXCLUSIVE EASEMENT FOR PUBLIC UTILITIES PURPOSES; DIRECTING THE CITY CLERK TO RECORD THE ORDINANCE IN THE PUBLIC RECORDS OF THE CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT IN AND FOR OKEECHOBEE COUNTY, FLORIDA; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICT; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE."**

City staff advised that due to a recent submittal for a Future Land Use Map Amendment and Zoning Petition, the final adoption for this proposed ordinance needs to be postponed. Motion and second by Council Members Keefe and Jarriel to postpone the adoption of proposed Ordinance No. 1231 to March 15, 2022.

Mr. Mitch Stephen of 17775 Middle Brooke Way, Boca Raton, who is the property owner and applicant addressed the Council explaining the Federal Program for Economic Opportunity Zones of which this property is located within and his proposed development for an apartment complex. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

VI. PUBLIC HEARING CONTINUED

- B. Motion and second by Council Members Keefe and Clark to read by title only, proposed Ordinance No. 1232, closing the alleyway in Block 121, CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, Abandonment of Right-of-Way Petition No. 21-002-AC [as presented in Exhibit 2]. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

Attorney Fumero read proposed Ordinance No.1232 by title only as follows: **“AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA; VACATING AND ABANDONING CERTAIN RIGHTS-OF-WAY BEING AN UNIMPROVED PORTION OF AN ALLEYWAY LYING WITHIN BLOCK 121, CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, ACCORDING TO THE PLAT THEREOF AS RECORDED IN PLAT BOOK 5, PAGE 5, PUBLIC RECORDS OF OKEECHOBEE COUNTY, FLORIDA PETITION NO. 21-002-AC; RESERVING UNTO THE CITY, ITS SUCCESSORS AND ASSIGNS A NON-EXCLUSIVE EASEMENT FOR PUBLIC UTILITIES PURPOSES; DIRECTING THE CITY CLERK TO RECORD THE ORDINANCE IN THE PUBLIC RECORDS OF THE CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT IN AND FOR OKEECHOBEE COUNTY, FLORIDA; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICT; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.”**

City staff advised that due to a recent submittal for a Future Land Use Map Amendment and Zoning Petition, the final adoption for this proposed ordinance needs to be postponed. Motion and second by Council Members Jarriel and Clark to postpone the adoption of proposed Ordinance No. 1232 to March 15, 2022. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

- C. Motion and second by Council Members Clark and Jarriel to read by title only, proposed Ordinance No. 1247, amending the Code of Ordinances Chapter 30, Nuisances, to provide Code Enforcement procedures regarding demolition of blighted and dangerous structures [as presented in Exhibit 3]. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

Attorney Fumero read proposed Ordinance No.1247 as follows: **“AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA RELATING TO THE DEMOLITION OF BLIGHTED STRUCTURES; AMENDING THE CITY CODE OF ORDINANCES AT CHAPTER 30, ARTICLE II “NUISANCE” BY SPECIFICALLY AMENDING SECTION 30-31 “DEFINITIONS”; SPECIFICALLY AMENDING SECTION 30-43 “PUBLIC NUISANCES”; SPECIFICALLY AMENDING SECTION 30-74 “RESERVED”; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; REPEALING ALL ORDINANCES OR PARTS OF ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT HEREWITH; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.”**

Motion and second by Council Members Clark and Keefe to adopt proposed Ordinance No. 1247. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

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

VII. NEW BUISNESS

- A. Mr. John Creasman, Okeechobee Utility Authority (OUA) Board Chairperson, presented a recap of the October 2021 update, which featured their three major Southwest Service Area (SWSA) projects and the Southwest (SW) 5th Avenue Septic to Sewer Project. SWSA Project 1 consists of a Master Pump Station, Master Force Main, and SE-2 Diversion Force Main. The expected total cost of \$6,186,939.00 is fully funded by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) Appropriations. SWSA Project 2 includes two master vacuum stations and a collection system and could provide approximately 700 new connections. The expected total costs, including engineering and construction is \$10,830,783.00 with \$612,756.00 for the Oak Lake Estates portion. This project is partially funded by FDEP Appropriations with the remainder to be funded from a United States Department of Agriculture loan. Construction is to begin tentatively by December 2022. SWSA Project 3 consists of the Okee-Tantie Force Main, and the State Road 78 service corridor to the Master Pump Station to provide approximately 600 new connections. The expected cost is \$8,575,000.00 and is fully funded by the FDEP Appropriations. Construction is scheduled for April 2023 with completion by Summer 2024. When completed, these projects are expected to remove annually, 12.4 tons of nitrogen and 3 tons of phosphorus from being discharged into the waterways. The SW 5th Avenue Septic to Sewer Project, has not been finalized, design is to begin by Spring of 2022 with bidding in late Fall and construction by December. Completion is expected by late Summer 2023.

A new project he reviewed is the Treasure Island Septic to Sewer Project. Design is expected to be completed in Summer of 2023, with bidding in the Fall and construction to begin by December. Completion is expected in late Spring 2025. The funding for this project has not been identified. Mr. Creasman assured the Council that all types of design systems will be considered. The selected design will be based on the one that provides the best life expectancy and maintenance during power-outages. The next project to begin will be Pine Ridge Park. The 12-slide power point presentation has been incorporated in the official minute file.

VII. NEW BUSINESS CONTINUED

- A. Continued: In response to the Councils' questions, Mr. Creasman explained that the OUA has not been provided with information on how the proposed development that is being considered South of the Buckhead Ridge area (in Glades County) and is within the OUA Service Area, will be serviced for wastewater. The topic of how customers are notified when boil water notices are issued and when it ends was discussed. Mr. Creasman asked that the Council encourage individuals to contact the OUA office to ensure the correct phone numbers are on file for these call-out notices, and that they notify OUA staff when they do not receive a notice so this can be corrected. Additionally, the information is provided on the OUA website and Facebook page. This item is for information purposes, no official action is required.
- B. Mayor Watford presented information regarding two proposed bills being considered currently. A motion and second was made by Council Members Keefe and Jarriel to send a letter officially opposing Senate Bill 620/House Bill 569 and supporting the adoption of Senate Bill 224/House Bill 105 to the appropriate State Legislators, Leadership, Committee, and Florida League of Cities. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

ITEM ADDED TO ADGENDA:

- C. Administrator Ritter wanted the Council to be aware that the tax deed sale for the Primitive Baptist Church property, located at 1003 SW 3rd Avenue (Legal: Lots 9-12 of Block 8, SOUTH OKEECHOBEE, Plat Book 1, Page 12, Okeechobee County public records), is on Thursday. Finance Director Riedel has completed the required online training, she explained the new electronic bidding process, which will require the City to submit a cashier's check by Wednesday, of 10 percent of the maximum bid, estimated document stamps and recording fees. If the City's final bid is accepted, a second cashier's check for the remaining balance is required to be submitted within 24-hours. We will know by 4:00 P.M. Thursday if we are successful in purchasing this property. No official action was required for this item.

VIII. CITY ATTORNEY UPDATE

Attorney Fumero had no new information to provide.

IX. CITY ADMINSTRATOR UPDATE

- The Strategic Five-Year Plan and power point will be sent to the Councils emails soon.
- The Request for Qualifications (RFQ) No. ADM-01-32-11-21 selection/ranking committee will meet on January 24th at 10:00 A.M. with the results for City Council consideration at the February 1, 2022, meeting.
- The contract for work in the Commerce Center related to the Water Management Permit will also be on the February 1st agenda.
- Work at the Cattleman's Square (Block L/Park #5) in Flagler Park continues with contractor Mark Brandel overseeing the construction. Mr. Frank DeCarlo of American Well Drilling donated the installation of a well for the irrigation.
- The City's request for \$500,000.00 went through the Legislative Committee as well as the Storm Water Project, funding continues to look favorable.

X. COUNCIL MEMBER COMMENTS

Council Member Jarriel:

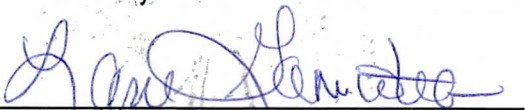
- reminded everyone that the Town Hall Meeting is Monday, January 24th, he has been going door to door throughout the neighborhoods to get people to come;
- Judge Wallace was recovering well from a recent illness.

Council Member Keefe:

- thanked Mayor Watford for being a "home rule champion" and all that he does for the City, and encouraged his fellow Council Members to speak up and keep a watch on potential legislation;
- inquired about the repairs to the gun in Veterans Park (Block E/Park #1 of Flagler Park). Council Member Chandler responded, Mr. Greg Maynard and several volunteers are working to complete the repairs.

XI. ADJOURN, Mayor Watford adjourned the meeting at 7:06 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.