



**CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA**  
**JULY 5, 2022, REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING AND WORKSHOP**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Watford, called the regular meeting of the City Council for the City of Okeechobee to order on July 5, 2022, at 5:00 P.M. in the City Council Chambers, located at 55 Southeast 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 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" M. Keefe, Jr.

**III. AGENDA AND PUBLIC COMMENTS**

- A. There were no requests for items to be added, deferred, or withdrawn from the agenda.
- B. Motion and second by Council Members Keefe and Chandler to approve the agenda as published.  
**Motion Carried Unanimously.**
- C. There were no comment cards submitted for public participation for issues not on the agenda.

**IV. MAYOR WATFORD OPENED THE CAPITAL PROJECTS BUDGET WORKSHOP AT 5:04 P.M.**

- A. The purpose of the workshop was to discuss high-profile projects presented by Staff. Finance Director India Riedel reviewed each item listed on the five-page Capital and High-Profile Projects spreadsheet including whether the item is mandated, a replacement or new item, estimated cost, ongoing annual cost, and the potential for grant funding [as presented in **Exhibit 1**]. Distributed at the meeting were two additional pages, one containing the audited fund balances as of Fiscal Year (FY) 2020-21 comparing the combined Fund Balance from General and Capital Improvement Projects Funds with estimated use of General Operating Expenses for FY 2022-23 and then listing amounts of the Contingency Fund utilizing the recently adopted Fund Balance Policy. The second page provided a chart from 2017 to 2023 comparing the City's cost-of-living-adjustment (COLA) to employees to that of the Social Security Administration COLA, the Bureau of Labor percentage change, and the State of Florida consumer price index. Mr. Frank Irby addressed the Council by recommending not to construct more sidewalks until the existing ones can be maintained and suggested the projects be listed in order of priority. **Mayor Watford directed that, at the next meeting, the Council discuss the priority of the projects presented in conjunction with the items provided by Administrator Ritter in the Five-Year Strategic Plan. Additionally, each Council Member should express their input on the projects to Mr. Ritter prior to the next meeting.**

**V. MAYOR WATFORD ADJOURNED THE WORKSHOP AND OPENED THE REGULAR SESSION AT 6:06 P.M.**

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

- A. Motion and second by Council Members Jarriel and Keefe to read by title only, proposed Ordinance No. 1254 regarding Land Development Regulation (LDR) Text Amendment Application No. 22-001-TA for home-based businesses [as presented in **Exhibit 2**]. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

City Attorney John Fumero read proposed Ordinance No. 1254 by title only as follows: "**AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA; AMENDING SECTION 90-633, HOME OCCUPATION WITHIN CHAPTER 90, OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICT; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**"

Motion and second by Council Members Chandler and Clark to adopt proposed Ordinance No. 1254. Mayor Watford opened the floor for public comment. Mr. Frank Irby asked whether home-based businesses was defined, Attorney Fumero responded yes, and it was very broad. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

- B. Motion and second by Council Members Jarriel and Clark to read by title only, proposed Ordinance No. 1258, extending the sunset date one year for Ordinance No. 1224, adopting the Holding Property Rezoning Program [as presented in **Exhibit 3**]. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**



VI. PUBLIC HEARING CONTINUED

- B. **Continued.** Attorney Fumero read proposed Ordinance No. 1258 by title only as follows: **“AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA; EXTENDING THE HOLDING REZONING PROGRAM CREATED BY ORDINANCE 1224; PROVIDING FOR A ONE (1) YEAR SUNSET CLAUSE; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICT; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.”**

Motion and second by Council Members Chandler and Keefe to adopt proposed Ordinance No. 1258. Mayor Watford opened the floor for public comment. Ms. Kaylee King asked whether there were properties with a Holding Zoning, Clerk Gamiotea responded there are 43. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

MAYOR WATFORD CLOSED THE PUBLIC HEARING AT 6:18 P.M.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Okeechobee County Economic Development Corporation Business Manager, Kaylee King provided a summary of the recently held Junior Leadership Skills Camp, which is to provide soft skills training, promote leadership skills, and encourage personal development among local young leaders. She gave an overview of the local businesses the participants visited on field trips and highlighted some of the experiences the students had during the Camp which was led by teachers Brittany Carrier and Jonathan Schrock. Ashley Garcia Reyes and Raymundo Medrano, both high school seniors, addressed the Council with highlights of what they learned at the Camp and an overview of their proposed project which was a plan to replace junk yards in the residential areas with parks. Alice and Isaac Mosely, middle school students, then spoke about their favorite parts of the Camp and their proposed project which was to create a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics center. Their parents, Jason and Khamphou Mosely, expressed their appreciation to the community for providing this opportunity to their children. No official was required for this item.

- B. Motion and second by Council Members Keefe and Jarriel to read by title only, proposed Ordinance No. 1257 regarding LDR Text Amendment Application No. 22-002-TA, reducing the Application for Joinder Fee from \$500 to \$100 [as presented in **Exhibit 4**]. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

Attorney Fumero read proposed Ordinance No. 1257 by title only as follows: **“AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA; AMENDING APPENDIX C, SCHEDULE OF LDR FEES AND CHARGES, LDR’S OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICT; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.”**

Motion and second by Council Members Keefe and Chandler to approve the first reading of proposed Ordinance No. 1257 and set August 2, 2022, as the final hearing date. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

- C. Motion and second by Council Members Jarriel and Clark to approve the City of Okeechobee Governmental Accounting Standards Board 75 Other Post-Employment Benefits Engagement Letter [with Gabriel, Roeder, Smith and Company as presented in **Exhibit 5**]. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**
- D. Motion and second by Council Members Keefe and Chandler to approve the [one-year] Renewal with Public Risk Management Group Health Insurance and add the proposed Health Savings Account and Medicare Plans [as presented in **Exhibit 6**]. Mr. Chris Kinley, Regional Sales Director of Health Equity, presented information regarding potential benefits of offering a health savings account, how the plan worked, and responded to various questions from the Council. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

VIII. CITY ATTORNEY UPDATE

- Waste Management contract renewal and proposed Rate Resolutions have been provided to Staff;
- Draft of amendment to the Code regulating fireworks is in progress;
- CSX Railroad blocking all major crossings will be addressed via a letter;
- Working with Clerk’s Office on some challenging public records requests.

IX. CITY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE

- Assisting in drafting the letter to CSX regarding the need for the City to be notified when the railroad crossings need to be closed for extended periods;
- Two grant applications, Parking Study and Roadway Evaluations, were submitted through the Department of Economic Opportunity, neither were awarded;
- City Hall is still on a list for the Federal Grant through Representative Steube’s office, for 2023;
- Received \$80,000.00 from the sale of Fire Department vehicles and another \$4,000.00 from the sale of other equipment;

**IX. CITY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE CONTINUED**

- Letter submitted with other Lake Okeechobee communities in support of a project to clean up the Lake and provide help to agricultural community.

**X. COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Council Member Chandler thanked Staff for their work on the Capital Budget Projects.

Council Member Clark announced the Tourist Development Council is pursuing to bring the main bass tournament back to Okeechobee in February, projected revenue is \$6 million.


Mayor Watford:

- Commissioner Terry Burroughs was elected Vice-President of the Florida Association of Counties (FAC);
- Commissioner Kelly Owens was appointed to serve on several FAC committees;
- Representative Kaylee Tuck will be at the Treasure Coast Regional League of Cities and Treasure Coast Council of Local Governments July 20, 2022 meeting and Barbeque.

**XI. THE WORKSHOP WAS NOT RECONVENED****XII. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further items, Mayor Watford adjourned the meeting at 7:24 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.