



**CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA
JULY 19, 2022, 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 July 19, 2022, at 6:06 P.M. in the City Council Chambers, located at 55 Southeast 3rd Avenue, Room 200, Okeechobee, Florida. The invocation was offered by Pastor Warren Kelly of the Okeechobee Praise and Worship Center; 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A. Mayor Watford asked whether there were any items to be added, deferred, or withdrawn. He noted the correct Warrant Register for Consent Agenda, Item B, is June, not May as listed.

B. Motion and second by Council Members Keefe and Chandler 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 called the November 8, 2022, General City Election for the Offices of City Council and City Clerk. The proclamation was presented to Clerk Gamiotea and read into the record as follows: **"Whereas, under and by virtue of the provisions of the Charter, Elections Chapter 26 of the Code of Ordinances for the City of Okeechobee, and Florida State Laws, it is the duty of the Mayor to proclaim and call General City Elections at the time and manner provided therein; and Whereas, proclaiming General City Elections shall be issued by a Proclamation, at least 90-days prior to the date of holding of such election, signed by the Mayor, attested by the City Clerk. Proclamation shall specify the office or offices to be filled, the cause of the vacancy of such office or offices, and the date of the expiration of the terms of such office or offices; and Whereas, the City Clerk shall publish the Proclamation in the local newspaper at least twice, once being in the fifth week, and once being in the third week, prior to the week in which the General City Election will be held. Now, therefore, I, Dowling R. Watford, Jr., Mayor of the City of Okeechobee, Florida do hereby proclaim and declare that a General City Election be held by the City of Okeechobee qualified electors who have registered to vote by October 11, 2022, for the purpose of electing the following officers to serve as such, for four years, beginning January 2, 2023, and ending January 7, 2027, following such election or until their successors are elected and qualified: Three (3) City Council Members and One (1) City Clerk. Said General Election shall be held on November 8, 2022, from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM; at the County Polling or Voting Precinct(s), which have been established by the County Supervisor of Elections and Board of County Commissioners; or during the Early Voting period as provided by State Law, to be held from October 29, through November 5, 2022, from 8:30 AM to 7 PM, at the Supervisor of Elections Office; or Vote-by-Mail as provided by State Law."**

B. Mayor Watford called for a Referendum Question to be on the November 8, 2022, General Election by Proclamation. The proclamation was presented to Clerk Gamiotea and was read into the record as follows: **"Whereas, under and by virtue of the provisions of the Charter, Elections Chapter 26 of the Code of Ordinances for the City of Okeechobee, and Florida State Laws, it is the duty of the Mayor to proclaim and call a Referendum during the General Election at the time and manner provided therein; and Whereas, proclaiming a Referendum shall be issued by a Proclamation, at least 90-days prior to the date of holding of such election, signed by the Mayor, attested by the City Clerk, and specify the issues or questions to be voted upon in the Referendum, including the wording of the Referendum as it will appear on the ballot; and Whereas, the City Clerk shall publish the Proclamation in the local newspaper at least twice, once being in the fifth week, and once being in the third week, prior to the week in which the Referendum Question on the General Election Ballot will be held. Now, therefore, I, Dowling R. Watford, Jr., Mayor of the City of Okeechobee, Florida do hereby proclaim and declare that a Referendum be held at the November 8, 2022 General Election by the City of Okeechobee qualified electors who have registered to vote by October 11, 2022."**

IV. PRESENTATIONS AND PROCLAMATIONS CONTINUED

B. Continued: Election day voting will be from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM; at the County Polling or Voting Precinct(s), which have been established by the County Supervisor of Elections and Board of County Commissioners; or during the Early Voting period as provided by State Law, to be held from October 29, through November 5, 2022, from 8:30 AM to 7 PM, at the Supervisor of Elections Office; or Vote-By-Mail as provided by State Law. Said Referendum wording shall appear on the General Election Ballot, as adopted on June 7, 2022, and set out in the Section 5.B of City Ordinance No. 1253: Revision of the City Charter for the City of Okeechobee, Florida. Shall the Charter for the City of Okeechobee be updated and revised to (i) incorporate a Citizens' Bill of Rights; (ii) update and modernize the City Charter; (iii) codify a number of charter-type provisions in the City Code of Ordinance, but not in the City Charter; (iv) eliminate provisions that are obsolete or inconsistent with, state law and municipal governance; and (v) render the City Clerk office from an elective position to an appointive position. Yes_____ No_____."

V. CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by Council Members Jarriel and Keefe to:

A. [Dispense with the reading and] approve the meeting Minutes for June 7, 2022, June 21, 2022, and July 5, 2022 [as presented in **Exhibit 3**]; and

B. Approve the June 2022 Warrant Register [in the amounts: General Fund, \$919,737.14; Public Facilities Improvement Fund, \$24,995.23; and Capital Improvement Projects Fund, \$9,614.63, as presented in **Exhibit 4**].

Motion Carried Unanimously.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Motion and second by Council Members Jarriel and Clark to read by title only, proposed Ordinance No. 1256 for Rezoning Petition No. 22-004-R, submitted by Anita Nunez/Anita's Rental Properties to rezone 2.41+/- vacant unplatted acres [as presented in **Exhibit 5**]. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

City Attorney John Fumero read proposed Ordinance No. 1256 by title only, as follows: "**AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA; AMENDING OFFICIAL ZONING MAP OF THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE BY REZONING A CERTAIN TRACT OF LAND MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED HEREIN, FROM RESIDENTIAL SINGLE FAMILY-ONE (RSF-1) TO HEAVY COMMERCIAL (CHV), PETITION NO. 22-004-R; AMENDING THE ZONING MAP; ACCORDINGLY, PROVIDING FOR CONFLICT; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**"

Motion and second by Council Members Chandler and Jarriel to approve the first reading of proposed Ordinance No. 1256 and set August 16, 2022, as the final hearing date [per Planner Ben Smith, contingent upon the associated Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map Amendment Application No. 22-004-SSA being adopted on August 2, 2022]. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

B. Motion and second by Council Members Keefe and Clark to approve an Application submitted by Okeechobee Main Street (OKMS), to temporarily close a portion of Southwest 6th Avenue between North and South Park Streets, from 5:00 P.M. on August 5, 2022, to 2:00 P.M. August 6, 2022, for the dedication and unveiling of the Cattle Drive Sculpture and Cattlemen's Square Park [in **FLAGLER PARK BLOCK L**/Park No. 5, as presented in **Exhibit 6**]. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

C. Motion and second by Council Members Chandler and Keefe to approve the 2022-23 School Resource Officer Agreement for Okeechobee Christian Academy [as presented in revised **Exhibit 7**, distributed during the Meeting]. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

D. Motion and second by Council Members Jarriel and Clark to approve the renewal of a Memorandum of Understanding with Okeechobee County for the administration of Traffic Control Preemption [as presented in **Exhibit 8**]. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

E. Administrator Ritter distributed a four-page spreadsheet prioritizing the Projects as presented in during the July 5, 2022, Workshop. The first three pages listed possible projects, without the potential of grant funding, and their ranking. The fourth page prioritized the projects with potential grant funding. Staff will utilize the spreadsheet to assist with preparing the proposed budget. Following various questions, Mayor Watford suggested the Council discuss any specific projects with Administrator Ritter prior to the Budget Workshops. No official action was requested or required for this item.

VI. NEW BUSINESS CONTINUED

- F. Motion and second by Council Members Chandler and Keefe to approve the maximum Millage Rate for advertisement for 2022 Tax Notices, Millage Rate of 7.6018 for Budget Year 2022-23 [as presented in **Exhibit 9**]. **Motion Carried three to two, Council Members Clark and Jarriel voting No.**
- G. Motion and second by Council Members Chandler and Clark to approve the budget calendar for Fiscal Year 2022-23, setting remaining Workshops for August 2, 2022 at 5:00 P.M. and August 16, 2022 at 5:00 P.M., if needed; First Budget Hearing for September 6, 2022 at 6:00 P.M. with Regular Council Meeting; and reschedule the Regular Council Meeting to be held September 20, 2022, to the same date as the Final Budget Hearing on September 26, 2022 at 6:00 P.M. [as presented in **Exhibit 10**]. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**
- H. The Annual Evaluation of Administrator Ritter was reviewed. On July 12, 2022, Clerk Gamiotea disbursed individual evaluation forms to the Mayor and Council to complete prior to the meeting. The evaluations contain 14 questions and have been incorporated into the official minute file. The final scores as follow: Chandler 4.7, Clark 4.8, Jarriel 5.0, Keefe 3.7, Watford 4.9; for an overall average score of 4.6 out of 5.0. The Tally Sheet has also been incorporated into the official minute file.

VII. CITY ATTORNEY UPDATE

- Addressing issues with Okeechobee Trailer and Fishing Resort;
- Deferred loan agreement with CDBG Housing;
- Continuing to research options to change how the Technical Review Committee operates to make it a non-Sunshine entity while ensuring to maintain transparency;
- Monitoring challenging public records requests with Clerk's Office and responding to issues as needed;
- Briefing will be provided at a future meeting on the topic of Zoning and Restrictive Covenants;
- Draft of proposed garbage Rate Resolutions have been provided to Staff;
- Draft of amendment to the Code regulating fireworks will be presented soon.

VIII. CITY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE

- Planning Board, Board of Adjustment, and Design Review Board, as well as the General Pension Board of Trustees have vacancies, encourage citizens to be involved;
- Draft letter to CSX, in discussion with Sheriff and Deputy County Administrator to determine best course of action, may only be a phone call.

IX. CITY COUNCIL COMMENTS

Council Member Chandler thanked Administrator Ritter and Staff for their work.

Council Member Jarriel asked Council Members to consider the millage rate and talk to citizens prior to the upcoming budget workshops.

Council Member Keefe asked Council Members and Staff to show support to the under-served area of Dean's Court by attending a community meeting on August 3, 2022 at 10:00 A.M.

Mayor Watford:

- Expressed gratitude for the support shown to his family during a recent tragedy;
- Provided reminder of the Treasure Coast Regional League of Cities and Treasure Coast Council of Local Governments July 20, 2022, meeting and Barbeque.

X. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further items, Mayor Watford adjourned the meeting at 7:15 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.