



CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA
AUGUST 16, 2022
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING AND BUDGET 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 August 16, 2022, at 5:00 P.M. in the City Council Chambers, located at 55 Southeast 3rd Avenue, Room 200, Okeechobee, Florida. A moment of silence was held in honor of Staff who recently suffered family tragedies, the invocation was offered by Associate Pastor Jim Dawson, of the First United Methodist Church; followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Council Member Jarriel.

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” 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- A. There were no requests for items to be added, deferred, or withdrawn from the agenda.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. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Motion and second by Council Members Keefe and Clark to [dispense with the reading and] approve the July 2022 Warrant Register [in the amounts: General Fund, \$675,731.27; Public Facilities Improvement Fund, \$29,486.32; and Capital Improvement Projects Fund, \$21,794.80, as presented in Exhibit 1]. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

V. MAYOR WATFORD OPENED THE PUBLIC HEARING AT 5:04 P.M.

- A. Motion and second by Council Members Jarriel and Clark to read by title only, proposed Ordinance No. 1259 regarding Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map (FLUM) Amendment Application No. 22-003-SSA submitted by Brandon Tucker, on behalf of property owner Jose Quijada, to reclassify 0.52+/- acres, Lots 17 through 19 of Block 26, NORTHWEST ADDITION TO OKEECHOBEE, from Industrial (I) to Multi-Family Residential (MFR). The vacant property is located at 1104 and 1108 Northwest (NW) 2nd [as presented in Exhibit 2]. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

City Attorney John Fumero read into the record the title of proposed Ordinance No. 1259 as follows: “AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA; AMENDING THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, ORDINANCE NO. 635 AS AMENDED, BY REVISING THE FLUM ON A CERTAIN TRACT OF LAND MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED HEREIN FROM I TO MFR, APPLICATION NO. 22-003-SSA; PROVIDING FOR INCLUSION OF ORDINANCE AND REVISED FLUM IN THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICT; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.”

Motion and second by Council Members Keefe and Clark to adopt proposed Ordinance No. 1259. City Planner Ben Smith reviewed the Planning Staff Report findings (revised pages seven and eight were distributed) and the recommendation for approval by the Planning Board. Clerk Gamiotea provided for the record that 25 courtesy notices were mailed to surrounding property owners, one was returned undeliverable, advertisements and two signs were properly posted, with no comments received to date. There were no public comments offered. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

- B. Motion and second by Council Members Jarriel and Clark to read by title only, proposed Ordinance No. 1260, regarding Comprehensive Plan FLUM Amendment Application No. 22-005-SSA submitted by the property owner, James Caprio/608 Okeechobee LLC, to reclassify 0.32+/- acres, Lots 9 and 10, of Block 78, OKEECHOBEE, from Single Family Residential (SFR) to Commercial (C), property is located at 205 Northeast (NE) 6th Street, [as presented in Exhibit 3]. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

Attorney Fumero read into the record the title of proposed Ordinance No. 1260 as follows: “AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA; AMENDING THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, ORDINANCE NO. 635 AS AMENDED, BY REVISING THE FLUM ON A CERTAIN TRACT OF LAND MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED HEREIN FROM SFR TO C, APPLICATION NO. 22-005-SSA; PROVIDING FOR INCLUSION OF ORDINANCE AND REVISED FLUM IN THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICT; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.”

V. PUBLIC HEARING CONTINUED

- B. Continued. Motion and second by Clark and Keefe to adopt proposed Ordinance No. 1260. The only public comment offered was by Mr. Steve Dobbs of 209 NE 2nd Street, who was in attendance on behalf of the applicant. Planner Smith reviewed the findings of the Planning Staff Report and the recommendation of the Planning Board to approve this amendment which is submitted concurrently with Rezoning Petition No. 22-005-R. Clerk Gamiotea provided for the record that 20 courtesy cards were mailed to surrounding property owners, with one returned undeliverable, advertisements and one sign were properly posted, with no objections or comments received to date. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

VI. MAYOR WATFORD OPENED THE PUBLIC HEARING FOR QUASI-JUDICIAL ITEMS AT 5:29 P.M.

The following items are quasi-judicial in nature. In accordance with section 286.0115, Florida Statutes (FS), an opportunity for persons to speak on each item will be made available after the applicant and staff have made their presentations on each item. All testimony, including public testimony and evidence, may be made under oath or affirmation. Additionally, each person who gives testimony may be subject to cross-examination. If you do not wish to be either cross-examined or sworn, your testimony will be given its due weight. The general public may request the Board to ask questions of staff or witnesses on their behalf. Any person presenting documents to the Council should provide the City Clerk with a minimum of 10 copies. Further details of the quasi-judicial procedure may be obtained from the Clerk. No verbatim record by a certified court reporter is made of these proceedings. Accordingly, any person who may seek to appeal any decision involving the matters noticed herein will be responsible for making a verbatim record of the testimony and evidence at these proceedings upon which any appeal is to be based (see Section 286.0105, FS.). In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 286.26, FS, persons needing a special accommodation to participate in this proceeding should contact the City Clerk's office at 863-763-9814 seventy-two (72) hours in advance of this proceeding.

- A. Motion and second by Council Members Chandler and Jarriel to read by title only, proposed Ordinance No. 1256 regarding Rezoning Petition No. 22-004-R submitted by property owner, Anita Nunez/Anita's Rental Properties, to rezone 2.41+/- acres from Residential Single Family-One (RSF-1) to Heavy Commercial (CHV), vacant property is located in the 1000 block on the East side of South Parrot Avenue. The proposed use is to develop a new commercial business [as presented in **Exhibit 4**]. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

Attorney Fumero read into the record the title of proposed Ordinance No. 1256 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 RSF-1 TO 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 Jarriel and Keefe to adopt proposed Ordinance No. 1256. Attorney Fumero administered an oath to Mr. Dobbs of 209 NE 2nd Street, who was in attendance on behalf of the applicant and expressed his support for approval. Planner Smith reviewed the Planning Staff Report findings and Planning Board's recommendation of approval. Clerk Gamiotea provided for the record that 18 courtesy cards were mailed to surrounding property owners, advertisements and two signs were properly posted, with no objections or comments received to date. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

- B. Motion and second by Council Members Clark and Keefe to read by title only, proposed Ordinance No. 1261, regarding Rezoning Petition No. 22-005-R, submitted by property owner James Caprio/608 Okeechobee LLC, to rezone 0.64+/- acres, Lots 7 and 8 from Commercial Professional Office (CPO) and Lots 9 and 10 from RSF-1 to Light Commercial (CLT) of Block 78, OKEECHOBEE. The property is located at 201 through 205 NE 6th Street. The proposed use is to expand the existing business located directly North of this property [as presented in **Exhibit 5**]. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

Attorney Fumero read into the record the title of proposed Ordinance No. 1261 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 CPO AND RSF-1 TO CLT, PETITION NO. 22-005-R; AMENDING THE ZONING MAP ACCORDINGLY; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICT; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**"

Motion and second by Council Members Jarriel and Clark to approve the first reading of proposed Ordinance No. 1261 and set September 6, 2022, as the final public hearing date. The only public comment offered was by Mr. Dobbs of 209 NE 2nd Street, who was in attendance on behalf of the applicant. Planner Smith presented the Planning Staff Report findings. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

MAYOR WATFORD CLOSED THE QUASI-JUDICIAL PUBLIC HEARING AT 5:38 P.M.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Mrs. Tammy Cook-Weedon, Director of Landscape Architecture with Calvin, Giordano, and Associates (CGA), provided an update on the progress of the Flagler Parks Master Plan Project utilizing a 25-slide power point presentation, which has been incorporated into the official minute file.

VII. NEW BUSINESS CONTINUED

- A. Continued. Cattlemen’s Square, Block L/Park No. 5 (CGA Project Park No. 6) is mostly complete. The recent ribbon cutting ceremony for the Cattle Drive sculptures was a huge success. She reviewed the Project schedule, the revised conceptual designs improvements for the Butterfly Square, Block F/Park No. 6 (CGA Project Park No. 7), and planting plans for the bulb-outs along the south-side of West South Park Street (provided pro-bono by CGA). All designs improvements are being proposed within the set budgetary constraints of \$300,000.00 per Park.

The Butterfly Square has been redesigned from the previous presentation to remove the play area for children, exercise equipment, and restrooms. The four corner memorable park entrances have been removed, and instead will have an entry feature element at the center of the south-side of the block. The arial view still features a large butterfly by redesigning walkways to be the outline of the wings, which can also be used as walking pathways for exercise. The existing art sculptures, memorial benches, and flower area will remain but updated and cleaned. Additionally strategic landscaping, art sculptures, seating, picnic tables, trash receptacles, and screening will be added that blend with the existing colorful butterfly art displays and with the ‘old Florida” aesthetic of the remaining parks to establish a cohesive presentation of the entire area. This park will be the featured botanical garden with an added educational kiosk about native plants and butterflies. Mrs. Weedon then gave an overview of the goals for Settlers Square, Block A/Park No. 4 (CGA Project Park No. 5): restrooms with a storage building on the east-end, create memorable park entrances at each corner, replace as needed the Live Oak tree border on the perimeter, add six to eight bronze markers placed at prominent locations to highlight the first settlers to Okeechobee, and a sculpture of Mr. R.E. Hamrick to be placed on a bench at the flagpole. Remove shrubs as needed to open the bandstand area and create a stronger line spine to link to other parks. The future deadlines are to submit the proposed designs for Seminole Square by September 23rd, Speckled Perch Square by October 21st, Veterans Memorial Square by November 25th, and City Hall Plaza by December 16th. The Council briefly discussed whether or not to build the restrooms but did not come to any official decision.

The installment of security cameras was discussed and suggested to decrease recent issues at the new Cattlemen’s Square, and on-going issues at Centennial Park. Attorney Fumero and Clerk Gamiotea advised the video from the security cameras, if placed on City property, regardless of who purchased or maintains them, would be a public record, with a retention period of seven years, research on this issue will continue with Staff.

- B. County Fire Chief Ralph Franklin distributed a written report on services provided by Okeechobee County Fire Rescue, within the City. Normally a quarterly report is presented. However, since it has been one year, this report covered from August 3, 2021 through August 3, 2022. They responded to 1,440 incidents, of which 1,218 were for emergency medical services, and completed 427 fire inspections. The report has been incorporated in the official minute file. Included with the two-page report were descriptions of the incident types, property use descriptions, and the various actions taken by staff. It was requested that response times be included on future reports. Chief Franklin also advised the County-wide Fire Assessment Report had been completed and a copy would be provided to the City. This item is for informational purposes only, no official action is required.
- C. Motion and second by Council Members Chandler and Clark to approve the 2022-23 School Resource Officer Agreement with the Okeechobee County School Board [as presented in **Exhibit 6**]. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**
- D. Motion and second by Council Members Keefe and Clark to approve the purchase of two Harris Radio Dispatch Consoles in the amount of \$98,808.00 [as presented in **Exhibit 7**]. Mr. Guy Stevens, RCE Manager of Communications International, addressed the Council, providing information and answering questions. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**
- E. Motion and second by Council Members Jarriel and Keefe to approve the First Amendment to the Contract for Building Official and Inspection Services with JC Newell Construction Inspection Services, Inc. [as presented in **Exhibit 8**]. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

VIII. CITY ATTORNEY UPDATE

- Continuing to address Okeechobee Fishing and Trailer Park;
- Letter expressing concerns regarding the railroad crossings being closed for extended periods without prior notification sent to CSX;
- Monitoring on-going Worker’s Compensation issue;
- Working with Administrator Ritter to establish language to be used when selling City property;
- Will provide 2021 Home-Based Business Legislation to the Council as requested.

IX. CITY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATES

Addressed questions from the Council regarding the play zones/splashpads in the Master Plan for Flagler Park by reviewing the potential liability issues with the Park being located next to State Road 70. There is a small County property in Deans Court that could be developed into a park/play area for the City to maintain. This is being spearheaded by the Health Department.

X. CITY COUNCIL COMMENTS

Council Member Jarriel enjoyed the Cattlemen’s Square dedication festivities and is pleased to see citizens visiting Flagler Park and taking photographs daily.

Council Members Keefe announced the community health meeting he recently attended was productive.

XI. MAYOR WATFORD RECESSED THE REGULAR MEETING AT 6:28 P.M. AND RECONVENED BY OPENING THE BUDGET WORKSHOP AT 6:39 P.M.

A. The purpose of the Workshop was to review and discuss the proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2022-23 [as presented in **Exhibit 9**]. Finance Director India Riedel distributed a revised proposed Budget dated August 16, 2022, replacing the version dated August 2, 2022, that was published with the agenda. She also distributed two, one-page documents. One was titled, “Identification of Revised Items for Budget Workshop August 16, 2022.” Based on discussions at the previous Budget Workshop, the Total Projected Expenditures were reduced by \$284,108.00. The other was titled “General Fund Operational Cost Increase Over the Last Two Years” which identified specific expenditures as directed by the City Council and totaled \$1,409,862.00; the 2022 Fiscal Year End for the Fire Department Budget was \$1,588,440.00. Staff provided Council with a breakdown of increased expenses that accounted for all but \$178,578.00 of the remaining Fire Department money once the County was paid for fire services. It was noted these monies were likely used to make up for increased expenses in other line items.

The newly revised proposed Budget compared to the one discussed on August 2, 2022, reflects the General Fund Beginning Fund Balance decreased to \$4,342,501.00. Total Projected Revenues overall decreased to \$7,578,974.00 (Ad Valorem, Other Fees, Intergovernmental, Fines/Forfeitures/Penalties; Uses of Money and Property, Other Revenues, and Transferred-in from Public Facilities Improvement Fund all remained the same. Charges For Services increased to \$1,386,300.00; and Transferred-in from Capital Projects Improvement Fund decreased to \$535,950.00). Total Projected Expenditures decreased to \$7,452,866.00; leaving a new Fund Balance of \$4,342,501.00. Pages 2 and 3 provided a detailed Line-Item breakdown of the revenues, including the transfers-in from other funds. Projected Expenditures for each Department were decreased as follows:

511-Legislative/City Council (pages 4 and 5)	
Total Personnel Costs:	\$ 97,590.00
Total Supplies and Other Services:	\$ 85,176.00
FY 2022-23 Proposed Total:	\$ 182,766.00
512-Executive/Administration (pages 6 and 7)	
Total Personnel Costs:	\$ 216,260.00
Total Supplies and Other Services:	\$ 63,382.00
FY 2022-23 Proposed Total:	\$ 279,642.00
2512-Executive/City Clerk (pages 8 and 9)	
Total Personnel Costs:	\$ 208,666.00
Total Supplies and Other Services:	\$ 99,920.00
FY 2022-23 Proposed Total:	\$ 308,586.00
514-Legal Services (page 10)	
FY 2022-23 Proposed Total:	\$ 188,900.00
513-Finance (pages 11 and 12)	
Total Personnel Costs:	\$ 209,700.00
Total Supplies and Other Services:	\$ 133,900.00
FY 2022-23 Proposed Total:	\$ 343,600.00
519-General Services (pages 13 and 14)	
Total Personnel Costs:	\$ 178,962.00
Total Supplies and Other Services:	\$ 406,675.00
FY 2022-23 Proposed Total:	\$ 585,637.00
521-Police Department (pages 15 and 16)	
Total Personnel Costs:	\$2,739,260.00
Total Supplies and Other Services:	\$ 480,998.00
FY 2022-23 Proposed Total:	\$3,220,258.00

X. BUDGET WORKSHOP CONTINUED

A. Continued. 522-Fire Department (pages 17 and 18)	
Total Personnel Costs (Retirement and Unemployment):	\$ 63,814.00
Total Supplies and Other Services:	\$ 642,400.00
FY 2022-23 Proposed Total:	\$ 706,214.00
 541-Public Works (pages 19 and 20)	
Total Personnel Costs:	\$ 728,963.00
Total Supplies and Other Services:	\$ 909,163.00
FY 2022-23 Proposed Total:	\$1,637,263.00

The **Public Facility (Transportation) Fund** (pages 21 and 22) budget was presented with the same projections: Beginning Fund Balance of \$926,183.00; Total Projected Revenues of \$1,125,251.00; Total Projected Expenditures of \$1,150,951.00; plus \$350,000.00 to be transferred-out to the General Fund; leaving a Fund Balance of \$550,483.00. Two Council Members emphasized that research and comparison options be done to lease, finance, and/or purchase heavy equipment, to ensure the best overall costs were pursued.

The **Capital Projects Improvement Fund** (pages 23 and 24) budget had some changes: Beginning Fund Balance of \$3,590,400.00 remained the same; Total Projected Revenues of \$50,000.00 remained the same; Total Projected Expenditures decreased to \$857,000.00; plus, transfer-out \$83,000.00 to Other Grant Funds remained the same, the transfer-out of General Fund increased to \$535,950.00; leaving a new Fund Balance of \$2,164,450.00. In relation to this budget with Public Works operational expenditures, there was a lengthy discussion regarding projected increases. These items will be addressed by Public Works Director Allen at the next meeting.

The **Other Grants Fund** (page 25) proposed budget was presented with the same projections: Beginning Fund Balance of \$47,000.00; Total Projected Revenues of \$383,000.00, which includes \$83,000.00 transferred-in from Capital Improvement Projects Fund as Assigned Funds; Total Projected Expenditures of \$430,000.00; leaving a Fund Balance of zero.

The **Industrial Development Grant Fund** (page 26) proposed budget was presented with the same projections: Beginning Fund Balance of \$120,558.00; Total Projected Revenues of zero dollars; Total Projected Expenditures of \$120,558.00; leaving a Fund Balance of zero.

The **Appropriations Grant Fund** (page 27) proposed budget was presented with the same projections: Beginning Fund Balance of zero; Total Projected Revenues of \$250,800.00, which includes \$10,800.00 transferred-in from Capital Improvement Projects Fund; Total Projected Expenditures of \$250,800.00; leaving a Fund Balance of zero.

The **Law Enforcement Special Fund** (page 28) proposed budget was presented with the same projections: Beginning Fund Balance of \$15,600.00; Total Projected Revenues of \$1,000.00; Total Projected Expenditures of \$11,500.00; leaving a Fund Ending Balance of \$5,100.00.

There was a lengthy discussion on several topics, mostly regarding the projected revenues being overly conservative and consideration should be given to increasing them. **The consensus of the Council (three to two) was to leave the projected revenue amounts as presented.** The First Budget Public Hearing is scheduled for September 6, 2022, at 6:00 P.M.

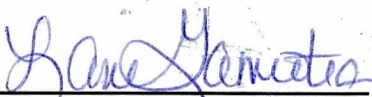
XII. **MAYOR WATFORD CLOSED THE BUDGET WORKSHOP AND RECONVENED THE REGULAR SESSION AT 7:42 P.M.**

A. There were no unfinished items of business to be discussed.

XIII. **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further items of discussion, Mayor Watford adjourned the meeting at 7:42 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.