



CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA
SEPTEMBER 26, 2022, REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING
AND FINAL BUDGET HEARING
MEETING MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Watford called the regular meeting of the City Council for the City of Okeechobee to order on September 26, 2022, at 6:00 P.M. in the City Council Chambers, located at 55 Southeast 3rd Avenue, Room 200, Okeechobee, Florida. Following a moment of silence in honor of a loss in a City family, the invocation was offered by Pastor Don Hanna of First United Methodist Church; 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. An Emergency Public Hearing was added as Item VIII., with Item A, Exhibit 6, Ordinance No. 1268; the remaining items renumbered accordingly.

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 proclaimed September 2022 as "Hunger Action Month." The Proclamation was presented to Ms. Debra Neufeld and Ms. Elisha Gohl of the Treasure Coast Food Bank and read into the record as follows: **"Whereas, hunger and poverty remain issues of grave concern in the United States, the State of Florida, the Treasure Coast, and the City of Okeechobee, with 17,489 children and adults in Okeechobee County now categorized as food insecure; and Whereas, the City of Okeechobee is committed to taking steps to raise awareness about the need to combat hunger in every part of our City and to provide additional resources that the citizens of Okeechobee need; and Whereas, the City of Okeechobee is committed to working with the Treasure Coast Food Bank in mobilizing people about the role and importance of food banks and other hunger relief organizations in addressing hunger and bringing attention to the need to devote more resources and attention to hunger issues; and Whereas, food banks and hunger relief organizations across the country, including the Treasure Coast Food Bank, coordinated Hunger Action Day on September 23, 2022 and will continue to host numerous events throughout the month of September to shed light on this important issue and encourage involvement in efforts to end hunger in their local community. Now, Therefore, I, Dowling R. Watford, Jr., by virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of the City of Okeechobee, Florida, do hereby proclaim the month of September 2022 as Hunger Action Month."**

V. CONSENT AGENDA

Motion and second by Council Members Keefe and Jarriel to:

A. [Dispense with the reading and] approve the meeting Minutes for August 2, 2022, August 16, 2022, and September 6, 2022; and

B. Approve the August 2022 Warrant Register [in the amounts: General Fund, \$467,280.26; Public Facilities Improvement Fund, \$17,771.50; Capital Improvement Projects Fund, \$2,311.46; and Industrial Development Grant Fund, \$11,377.65].

Motion Carried Unanimously.

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

A. Mayor Watford announced that the purpose of this public hearing is to consider for adoption the final reading of ordinances for the proposed Millage Rate levy and proposed Budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2022-23.

B. Mayor Watford announced that the proposed Millage Rate levy represents zero percent more than the roll-back rate computed pursuant to Florida Statute 200.065(1).

VI. FINAL BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING CONTINUED

- C.** Motion and second by Council Members Chandler and Jarriel to read by title only, proposed Ordinance No. 1266, levying a Millage Rate of 6.8987 on all real and tangible personal property for proposed FY October 1, 2022, through September 20, 2023 [as presented in **Exhibit 1**]. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

City Attorney John Fumero read into the record the title of proposed Ordinance No. 1266 as follows: **"AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA; LEVYING THE AD VALOREM PROPERTY TAX MILLAGE RATE FOR MUNICIPAL PURPOSES ON ALL TAXABLE PROPERTY WITHIN THE CITY IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF STATE LAW FOR THE FY BEGINNING OCTOBER 1, 2022, AND ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2023; PROVIDING THAT 6.8987 PER THOUSAND DOLLAR VALUATION SHALL NOT BE LEVIED ON HOMESTEAD PROPERTY; THAT 6.8987 VALUATION SHALL BE USED FOR GENERAL CITY PURPOSES; THAT SAID MILLAGE RATE IS ZERO PERCENT (0.00%) MORE THAN THE ROLL-BACK RATE OF 6.8987 COMPUTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH FLORIDA STATUTE 200.065(1); PROVIDING FOR CONFLICT; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE."**

Motion and second by Council Members Clark and Keefe to adopt proposed Ordinance No. 1266. There were no comments from the public or the Council. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

- D.** Motion and second by Council Members Keefe and Chandler to read by title only, proposed Ordinance No. 1267, setting the annual Budget for FY 2022-23 [as presented in **Exhibit 2**]. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

City Attorney Fumero read into the record the title of proposed Ordinance No. 1267 as follows: **"AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING AN ANNUAL BUDGET FOR THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA; FOR THE FY BEGINNING OCTOBER 1, 2022, AND ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2023; APPROPRIATING FUNDS FOR OPERATING EXPENSES OF THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE FOR THE GENERAL OPERATION OF THE SEVERAL DEPARTMENTS OF THE CITY AND OTHER FIXED OBLIGATIONS OF THE CITY FOR AND DURING THE FY; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICT AND SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE."**

Motion and second by Council Members Chandler and Jarriel to adopt proposed Ordinance No. 1267.

General Fund Beginning Fund Balance decreased to \$4,342,501.00. Total Projected Revenues are \$7,452,866.00 (includes Ad Valorem, Other Fees, Intergovernmental, Fines/Forfeitures/Penalties; Uses of Money and Property, Other Revenues; and Transferred-in from Public Facilities Improvement Fund and from Capital Improvement Projects Fund); Total Projected Expenditures are proposed at \$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 and transfers-in. Projected Expenditures for each Department were presented 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:	\$ 48,882.00
FY 2022-23 Proposed Total:	\$ 265,142.00
2512-Executive/City Clerk (pages 8 and 9)	
Total Personnel Costs:	\$ 208,666.00
Total Supplies and Other Services:	\$ 114,420.00
FY 2022-23 Proposed Total:	\$ 323,086.00
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

VI. FINAL BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING CONTINUED

D. Continued.

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

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:	\$ 728,100.00
Total Supplies and Other Services:	\$ 909,163.00
FY 2022-23 Proposed Total:	\$1,637,263.00

As discussed at the August 2, 2022, Budget Workshop, the Departments projected personnel costs included a 4.5 percent Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) for all employees effective October 1, 2022. Additionally, a 1.5 percent increase would be provided on June 1, 2023, for employees who score a least an average or above on their performance evaluation. Further changes implemented the "Minimum, Medium, and Maximum Salary Ranges" for new hires after October 1, 2022, excluding the positions for part-time, Mayor, Council Members, and City Administrator. The one-page spreadsheet was incorporated in the August 2, 2022, minute file. The spreadsheet does not incorporate the 4.5 percent COLA to the base Minimum (previously identified as Step 1 on the Salary Step Plan), Medium, and Maximum Salary Ranges for each position; however, it does incorporate the job titles and number of employees for those positions for FY 2022-23.

The **Public Facility (Transportation) Fund** (page 21) budget was presented as: Beginning Fund Balance \$926,183.00; Total Projected Revenues \$1,125,251.00; Total Projected Expenditures \$1,150,951.00; plus \$350,000.00 to be transferred-out to the General Fund; leaving a Fund Balance of \$550,483.00. See page 22 for the detailed list of specific expenditures and their estimated costs.

The **Capital Projects Improvement Fund** (page 23) budget was presented as: Beginning Fund Balance \$3,590,400.00; Total Projected Revenues \$50,000.00; Total Projected Expenditures \$857,000.00; plus, transfer-out \$629,750.00 of which \$83,000.00 goes to Other Grant Funds, \$10,800.00 goes to Appropriations Funds, and \$535,950.00 goes to General Fund; leaving a Fund Balance of \$2,163,650.00. See page 24 for the detailed list of specific expenditures and their estimated costs.

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

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

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

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

Mayor Watford opened the floor for public comment. Mr. Jon Folbrecht inquired about the status of the purchase of a backhoe as discussed at the previous meeting. Mayor Watford responded the item was still listed for purchase within the Public Facilities Improvement Fund on pages 21 and 22. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

MAYOR WATFORD CLOSED THE FINAL BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING AT 6:17 P.M.**VII. NEW BUSINESS**

- A. Mr. Russ Brown, Okeechobee Dixon Hendry Campus President of Indian River State College (IRSC), provided an update regarding the Promise Program that offers paid tuition for qualifying students to obtain an Associate in Art, Associate in Science, or Applied Associate in Science Degree, and is sponsored by the IRSC Foundation. There are 2,200 students enrolled in the four-county area, including 100 full-time and 50 part-time students in Okeechobee. Mr. Brown responded to questions from the Council regarding the continuation, expansion, and future goals of the program. This item is for informational purposes only, no official action required.
- B. Motion and second by Council Members Jarriel and Chandler to approve a Grant Agreement [No. A3067] for funding [\$50,000.00] with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection for the Centennial Park [ADA Kayak Launch and Landscaping] project [as presented in **Exhibit 3**]. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**
- C. Motion and second by Council Members Clark and Jarriel to [approve a] piggyback [Agreement from] Okeechobee County School Board's Agreement with CRA Architects, Inc. for outside renovation of City Hall and the Public Safety Building [as presented in **Exhibit 4**]. A motion to amend the motion on the floor, to add that the agreement cost is not to exceed \$10,000.00 was made by Council Member Clark and seconded by Council Member Chandler. **Motion To Amend Carried Unanimously. Motion As Amended Carried Unanimously.**
- D. Motion and second by Council Members Clark and Chandler to approve, and authorize the Administrator to execute, a Letter of Understanding of the current Agreement with CAS Governmental Services, LLC in the amount of \$18,000.00 for the term of October 1, 2022, to September 30, 2023 [as presented in **Exhibit 5**]. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

VIII. ADDED ITEM: MAYOR WATFORD OPENED THE EMERGENCY PUBLIC HEARING AT 6:34 P.M.

- A. Motion and second by Council Members Chandler and Clark to read by title only, proposed Emergency Ordinance No. 1268, designating the Police Chief as the City's Emergency Management Official and authorizing other emergency measures due to the potential impacts of Hurricane Ian [as presented in **Exhibit 6**]. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

City Attorney Fumero read into the record the title of proposed Ordinance No. 1268 as follows: "**AN EMERGENCY ORDINANCE ENACTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA, DESIGNATING THE CHIEF OF POLICE AS THE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICIAL FOR THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE; PROVIDING FOR THE CHIEF OF POLICE TO DECLARE A 72-HOUR STATE OF EMERGENCY WITHIN THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE DUE TO THE PREDICTED PATH OF HURRICANE IAN; PROVIDING FOR ACCEPTING THE RECOMMENDATION BY THE CHIEF OF POLICE TO EXTEND THE 72-HOUR DECLARATION; PROVIDING FOR DECLARATION TO CONTINUE FOR AN INDEFINITE PERIOD OF TIME AS DEEMED APPROPRIATE BY THE CHIEF OF POLICE; PROVIDING FOR AUTOMATIC EMERGENCY MEASURES; PROVIDING FOR DISCRETIONARY EMERGENCY MEASURES; PROVIDING FOR FILING DECLARATIONS AND MEASURES IN THE OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK AND PUBLICATION TO NEWS MEDIA; PROVIDING FOR VIOLATIONS; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICT; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**"

Motion and second by Council Members Keefe and Jarriel to adopt proposed Ordinance No. 1268. There were no public comments. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

MAYOR WATFORD CLOSED THE EMERGENCY PUBLIC HEARING AT 6:39 P.M.**IX. CITY ATTORNEY UPDATE**

- CRA Architects, Inc. piggyback Agreement;
- Reviewing Statutes regarding security camera recordings in relation to public records requirements;
- Continuing to work a Memorandum of Understanding with Okeechobee Main Street regarding landscaping endcaps along South Park Street;
- Drafting Bid for Public Works Landscape Maintenance;
- Researching ordinances related to short term rentals and what the City allows/disallows for these.

X. CITY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE

- A discussion regarding the Code Enforcement fine reductions process will be on the next agenda;
- Rezoning and Small-Scale Future Land Use Map Amendments for two City properties in progress;
- Meeting with developers who are interested in developing the 16 acres in the Northeast section.

XI. COUNCIL COMMENTS

Council Member Chandler commented on his recent travels out of state.

Council Member Jarriel stated he has spoken to several citizens who conveyed their appreciation to the Council for lowering the Millage Rate to the roll-back rate.

Council Member Keefe:

- Requested a preliminary, but real, discussion regarding a Fire Assessment on the next agenda;
- Advised Chief Hagan to be prepared to answer questions at the next meeting about the use of code citations written by law enforcement officers.

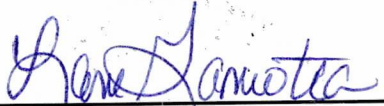
Council Member Clark:

- Provided an update from the Tourism Development Council on upcoming events: the Bass Masters Elite Series is returning after five years in February; the Music Festival will be in March;
- The County is adding a splash pad to the Sports Complex and a pump track at the Kiwanis Park;
- Inquired about the sale of agricultural exemption property that is not being used for agriculture by the new owners. Administrator Ritter responded that the information was provided to the Property Appraiser's Office, there were justifications to all except one.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further items, Mayor Watford adjourned the meeting at 6:55 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.