



CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA
MARCH 5, 2024, 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 March 5, 2024, at 6:00 P.M. in the City Council Chambers, located at 55 Southeast (SE) 3rd Avenue (AVE), Room 200, Okeechobee, Florida (FL). The invocation was offered by Father Jim Shevlin; followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Council Member Jarriel.

II. ATTENDANCE

City Clerk Lane Gamiotea called the roll. Members present to establish a quorum: Mayor Dowling R. Watford, Jr., Vice Mayor Monica M. Clark, and Council Members Noel A. Chandler, Robert “Bob” Jarriel, and David R. McAuley.

III. AGENDA AND PUBLIC COMMENTS

A. Modifications to the agenda were as follows: a revised agenda was published and posted on March 1, 2024; revised Minutes for February 20, 2024, were distributed via email earlier today; and, materials for Item VI. E. were distributed at the meeting and labeled as Exhibit 7.

B. Motion and second by Council Members Jarriel and McAuley to adopt the revised agenda as amended.
Motion Carried Unanimously.

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

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

Motion and second by Council Members Chandler and Jarriel to:

A. Dispense with the reading and approve the revised Minutes for February 20, 2024, [added to **Exhibit 1**].
Motion Carried Unanimously.

V. MAYOR WATFORD OPENED THE PUBLIC HEARING FOR ORDINANCE ADOPTION AT 6:03 P.M.

A. Motion by Council Member Chandler, second by Vice Mayor Clark, to read by title only, proposed Ordinance No. 1286, merging the Police Officers’ and Firefighters’ Pension Funds and providing for a retired firefighter medical stipend [as presented in **Exhibit 2**].
Motion Carried Unanimously.

City Attorney Greg Hyden read into the record the title of proposed Ordinance No. 1286 as follows: “**AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FL, PROVIDING FOR THE MERGER OF THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE MUNICIPAL POLICE OFFICERS’ PENSION TRUST FUND, CREATED PURSUANT TO ORDINANCE NO. 888 AS SUBSEQUENTLY AMENDED, AND THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE MUNICIPAL FIREFIGHTERS’ PENSION FUND, CREATED PURSUANT TO ORDINANCE NO. 889 AND AMENDED AND RESTATED PURSUANT TO ORDINANCE NO. 1229; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY OF PROVISIONS; REPEALING ALL ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT HERewith AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**”

Motion by Vice Mayor Clark, second by Council Member McAuley, to adopt proposed Ordinance No. 1286.

There were no public comments. Plan Administrator, Scott Baur of Resource Center, LLC, attended electronically via Zoom to answer questions. Clerk Gamiotea stated for the record the proposed Ordinance and Actuarial Impact Statement were sent to the FL Division of Retirement, with no comments received to date. **Roll Call Vote: Chandler – Yea, Clark – Yea, Jarriel – Yea, McAuley – Yea, Watford – Yea.**

Motion Carried Unanimously.

MAYOR WATFORD CLOSED THE PUBLIC HEARING AT 6:08 P.M.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Motion by Council Member Jarriel, second by Vice Mayor Clark to read by title only, proposed Ordinance No. 1287, prohibiting smoking/vaping in City parks, adding enforcement of the policy by the Code Enforcement citation process [as presented in **Exhibit 3**].
Motion Carried Unanimously.

VI. NEW BUSINESS CONTINUED

- A. Continued. City Attorney Hyden read into the record the title of proposed Ordinance No. 1287 as follows:
"AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FL, AMENDING THE CODE OF ORDINANCES AT CHAPTER 30 ENVIRONMENT; ADDING SECTION 30-47 SMOKING AT PUBLIC PARKS PROHIBITED; PROHIBITING SMOKING IN CITY PARKS; PROVIDING FOR ENFORCEABILITY; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICT; PROVIDING FOR CODIFICATION; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE."

Motion and second by Council Members McAuley and Jarriel to approve the first reading, and set April 2, 2024, as a final Public Hearing date for proposed Ordinance No. 1287. **Roll Call Vote: Chandler – Yea, Clark – Yea, Jarriel – Yea, McAuley – Yea, Watford – Yea.**

Motion Carried Unanimously.

- B. Council discussed the proposed offer from Landmark Precast, LLC, to purchase Lots 17, 17A, and 17B, CITY OF OKEECHOBEE COMMERCE CENTER, Plat Book 7, Pages 10 through 14, Okeechobee County public records, located in the 1000 block along Northeast (NE) 12th Street (ST), in the amount of \$325,000.00 [as presented in **Exhibit 4**]. **It was the consensus of the Council for Administrator Ritter to renegotiate an offer starting at \$450,000.000 with Landmark Precast, LLC.**
- C. Motion by Council Member Jarriel, second by Vice Mayor Clark to accept the offer from Advanced Medical Sanitation Inc., to purchase the West one-acre of Tract A, CITY OF OKEECHOBEE COMMERCE CENTER, Plat Book 7, Pages 10 through 14 [corrected from 7 through 10], Okeechobee County public records, located in the 800 block of NE 9th ST, in the amount of \$140,000.00 [as presented in **Exhibit 5**].
Motion Carried Unanimously.
- D. Motion and second by Council Members Chandler and McAuley to approve amending positions on the salary, position, and job title page in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023-24 Budget [as presented in **Exhibit 6**, change Operations Supervisor I (1) to Operations Supervisor I (0); and increase the number of positions for Maintenance Foreman from (1) to (2) with a minimum salary of \$53,500.00 and a midpoint of \$64,925.06].
Motion Carried Unanimously.
- E. Compare the City's current pay plan with the recommended pay plan provided by Evergreen Consulting as presented in **Exhibit 7**. **After discussion it was the consensus of the Council to review the final report and discuss the implementation of the recommendations at budget workshops for FY 2024-25.**

VII. CITY ATTORNEY UPDATE

- The longevity payment ordinance rescission was sent to the City Clerk on February 22, 2024, for review.
- Continuing to work on the final updates on Stormwater Ordinance No. 1275, based on Morris-Depew's comments.
- Working on a purchase and sale template for the City's Commerce Center property.
- The Declaration of Covenants and Restrictions for the City's Commerce Center is being reviewed to amend.
- A right-of-way use agreement is being worked on for the owner of Lightsey's Restaurant [decorative fence encroaching in the 100 block on the North side of Southwest (SW) 16th ST].
- Working on the revisions to remove tax payments on Cattlemen's Square Opinion of Title.
- Preparing proposed revisions to the Code of Ordinances related to Code Enforcement Magistrate's authority to change the procedure of Hearings and time in which the fines accrue, as well as correcting the Business Tax Receipt problem.

VIII. CITY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE

- The repaving project for SW 5th AVE will begin next week from just South of Central Elementary School to South Park Street, to coordinate with Spring Break.
- Sidewalk repairs will be starting on Saturday.
- The kayak ramp has been ordered for Public Works Staff to install in Centennial Park along Taylor Creek, without additional sidewalks needing to be constructed.
- Engineers and Architects will be visiting City Hall on Thursday taking the required measurements to begin the bidding process for the hardening of City Hall.
- Ms. Connie Vanassche of CAS Governmental Services, LLC, the City's Lobbyist, advised the City's State Appropriations request for hardening the Public Safety Building is still in the State's proposed budget.
- The job description for the Contracts Manager has been completed and the position will be advertised soon.

VIII. CITY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE CONTINUED

- Council Member Jarriel inquired about the status of selling two City properties. Administrator Ritter replied, the SE lot was sold to the owners of Gator Security, while the Okeechobee Utility Authority is interested in utilizing the SW property for their wastewater expansion project.

IX. COUNCIL COMMENTS

Council Member Chandler reminded everyone the Speckled Perch Festival is this weekend and inquired about a City entry in the parade. Administrator Ritter responded no; we are not riding in the parade. Council Member Jarriel added the parade is at 10:00 AM and the rodeo is at 2:00 PM.

X. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further items of discussion, 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.