

**OKEECHOBEE UTILITY AUTHORITY**

**MEETING MINUTES**

Tuesday, April 21, 2026 8:00 A.M.

Okeechobee Utility Authority

100 SW 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue

Okeechobee, Florida

**Chairperson Gilliland called the meeting to order at 8:00 A.M.**

**Chairperson Gilliland led all participating attendees and visitors in the Pledge of Allegiance.**

**Chairperson Gilliland addressed Agenda Item No. 1 and determined the voting members. The following Okeechobee Utility Authority Board Members were present:**

**Board Members:**

John Gilliland\*  
Steve Hargraves\*  
Harry Moldenhauer\*  
Steven Nelson\*  
Tabitha Trent\*

**Alternates:**

Melanie Anderson  
Glenn Sneider

**Absent:**

Jamie Gamiotea

\*Voting Board Members

**OUA Members:**

John Hayford  
Greg Kennedy

Lauriston Hamilton  
Jamie Mullis

Steve Conteaguero  
Michelle Willoughby

**Chairperson Gilliland addressed Agenda Item No. 2 "Agenda Additions or Deletions" Executive Director Hayford discussed that there was one addition to the agenda. Item No. 2A. 'NW-3 Lift Station Rehabilitation' Motion by Harry Moldenhauer to approve the Addition of Agenda Item No. 2A NW-3 Lift Station Rehabilitation. Second by Steven Nelson. Vote unanimous (5-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Gilliland addressed Agenda Item No. 2A. 'NW-3 Lift Station Rehabilitation' Executive Director Hayford discussed that the existing NW-3 Lift Station was built in 1982 and there have only been a few residential homes, an apartment complex and a few commercial businesses connected to the station. A developer has come in and developed the Mallard Landing project which consists of 100 lots and are building homes daily, with several being already occupied. The OUA added an extension for the sewer to the Mallard Landing project and picked up an additional 35 residential and commercial customers. Executive Director Hayford discussed that the lift station is in need of major upgrade and rehabilitation to accommodate the growth. The OUA will purchase the new pumps, base, base plates and parts at the cost of \$38,908.36. OUA staff requested quotes from four companies who specialize in Lift Station Rehabilitation. Executive Director Hayford reviewed the companies which were ranked by bid price for the labor, rehabilitation and coating. There was brief discussion. Motion by Steven Nelson to approve the purchase of the pumps and parts in the amount of \$39,308.36. Second by Steve Hargraves. Vote unanimous (5-0), motion carried.**

**Motion by Steven Nelson to accept the low bid of \$31,871.00 from Industry Standard for the Labor, Rehabilitation and Coating. Second by Steve Hargraves. Vote unanimous (5-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Gilliland addressed Agenda Item No. 3 ‘Consent Agenda’ Motion by Steven Nelson to accept the Consent Agenda as presented:**

- Consent Agenda Item No. 4 ‘Invoice from Holtz Consulting Engineers, Inc. - Mallard Landing Gravity Sewer Expansion in the amount of \$5,950.00’**
- Consent Agenda Item No. 5 ‘Invoice from Holtz Consulting Engineers, Inc. - State Road 78 Water Main the amount of \$7,987.50’**
- Consent Agenda Item No. 6 ‘Invoice from Holtz Consulting Engineers, Inc. – State Road 78 Water Main Phase III in the amount of \$35,724.00’**
- Consent Agenda Item No. 7 ‘Invoice from CHA Solutions – Vacuum Station #2 Generator Replacement in the amount of \$330.50’**
- Consent Agenda Item No. 8 ‘Invoice from CHA Solutions – Pine Ridge Park Expansion Project in the amount of \$2,305.05’**
- Consent Agenda Item No. 9 ‘Invoice from CHA Solutions – SWTP Ozone System Upgrade in the amount of \$3,374.00’**
- Consent Agenda Item No. 10 ‘Invoice from PRP Construction, LLC – Mallard Landing Gravity Sewer Expansion in the amount of \$33,975.00’**
- Consent Agenda Item No. 11 ‘Invoice from B & B Site Development, Inc. – SR 78W Water Main Improvements, Phase 2 in the amount of \$195,807.82’**
- Consent Agenda Item No. 12 ‘Invoice from Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. Treasure Island Septic to Sewer Project in the amount of \$106,408.65’**
- Consent Agenda Item No. 13 ‘Invoice from Sumner Engineering & Consulting, Inc. – SW 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue LPSS Design & Permitting in the amount of \$5,994.00’**
- Consent Agenda Item No. 14 ‘Invoice from Sumner Engineering & Consulting, Inc. – NW 15 Rehabilitation in the amount of \$9,387.00’**
- Consent Agenda Item No. 15 ‘Invoice from Sumner Engineering & Consulting, Inc. – Okee-Tantie Utility System Improvements in the amount of \$6,195.72’**
- Consent Agenda Item No. 16 ‘Invoice from Sumner Engineering & Consulting, Inc. – SWSA Septic to Sewer Connections Phase III Lots (Groups D, E and F) in the amount of \$5,455.00’**
- Consent Agenda Item No. 17 ‘Invoice from Sumner Engineering & Consulting, Inc. – SWSA Septic to Sewer Connections Phase III Lots (Groups G, H, and I) in the amount of \$1,630.00’**
- Consent Agenda Item No. 18 ‘Invoice from Raftelis in the amount of \$740.00’**
- Consent Agenda Item No. 19 ‘Invoice from Nason Yeager Harris & Fumero, P.A. – Legal Services in the amount of \$9,949.50’**
- Consent Agenda Item No. 20 ‘Invoice form Conely and Conely, P.A. – Legal Services in the amount of \$3,256.25’**
- Consent Agenda Item No. 21 ‘Invoice from Thorn Run Partners in the amount of \$3,500’**
- Consent Agenda Item No. 22 ‘Invoice from MacVicar in the amount of \$250.00’**
- Consent Agenda Item No. 23 ‘Minor Project Updates’**
- Consent Agenda Item No. 24 ‘Operations Director Monthly Report’**

**Second by Steve Hargraves. Vote unanimous (5-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Gilliland addressed Agenda Item No. 25 ‘Meeting Minutes from March 18, 2026’ Motion by Tabitha Trent to approve the meeting minutes from March 17, 2026 as presented. Second by Harry Moldenhauer. Vote unanimous (5-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Gilliland addressed Agenda Item No. 26 ‘Workshop Meeting Minutes from April 6, 2026’ Motion by Tabitha Trent to approve the workshop meeting minutes from April 6, 2026 as presented. Second by Steve Hargraves. Vote unanimous (5-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Gilliland addressed Agenda Item No. 27 ‘Public Comments’ There were none. Motion by Tabitha Trent to close public comments. Second by Steven Nelson. Vote unanimous (5-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Gilliland addressed Agenda Item No. 28 ‘Finance Report’ Finance Director Hamilton reviewed the Finance Report for period ending March 31, 2026. Motion by Tabitha Trent to approve the Finance Report as presented. Second by Steven Nelson. Vote unanimous (5-0), motion carried. *Greg Kennedy and Lauriston Hamilton out at 8:23AM***

**Chairperson Gilliland addressed Agenda Item No. 29 ‘Executive Director Selection’ Executive Director Hayford discussed that candidate Jennifer Wheeler withdrew from the selection as she accepted another position. Chairperson Gilliland asked that each board member provide their recommendation for the Executive Director position.**

Board Member Hargraves advised that his recommendation was Greg Kennedy.

Board Member Anderson advised that her recommendation was Greg Kennedy.

Board Member Harry Moldenhauer advised that his recommendation was Chad Rucks.

Board Member Sneider declined any input due to his lack of knowledge experience on the OUA Board.

Board Member Tabitha Trent advised that her recommendation was Chad Rucks due is his engineering experience and her second choice was Greg Kennedy.

Chairperson Gilliland advised that his recommendation was Greg Kennedy.

There was a brief discussion. **Motion by Steven Nelson to enter into contract negotiations with Greg Kennedy for the position of Executive Director. Second by Steve Hargraves. Vote unanimous (5-0), motion carried.** Chairperson Gilliland asked for a board member to volunteer to work with the attorney to develop an employment contract. Board Member Trent volunteered to work with the OUA attorney. *Glenn Sneider out at 8:45 A.M.* The contract is to be brought back at the next Board Meeting for review and acceptance. *Greg Kennedy and Lauriston Hamilton in at 8:46 A.M.*

Chairperson Gilliland informed Greg Kennedy that the OUA Board was offering him the position as the Executive Director.

Chairperson Gilliland thanked Lauriston Hamilton for his application.

**Chairperson Gilliland addressed Agenda Item No. 30 ‘Demolition and Removal of Structures, Septic Tank and Debris at 2702 SE 47<sup>th</sup> Terrace, Okeechobee, FL 34974’ Executive Director Hayford discussed that the OUA purchased the property at 2702 SE 47<sup>th</sup> Terrace in March 2026 for the future construction of South Site #1 Vacuum Pump Station, which will be a component of the Treasure Island**

Septic to Sewer Project. The property currently contains a dilapidated double-wide mobile home, car port and sheds. An invitation to bid for the demolition and removal of the structures, septic tank, concrete slabs and asphalt driveway was sent to four local contractors. Executive Director Hayford discussed that two of the four contractors responded with bids. Bids were received from Weeks Enterprises (\$23,830.00) and Chase Land Service (\$10,200.00). There was a brief discussion. **Motion by Tabitha Trent to accept the apparent low bid by Chase Land Service in the amount of \$10,200.00. Second by Steven Nelson. Vote unanimous (5-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Gilliland addressed Agenda Item No. 31 'Ground Water Treatment Plant Test Well'** Executive Director Hayford discussed that the quality of the water produced from the five active wells at the Ground Water Treatment Plant (GWTP) is very hard. Executive Director Hayford discussed that the goal of the test is to locate a geological horizon which will produce water with a lower hardness, while supplying the needed volume of 300-400 gallons per minute. Executive Director Hayford discussed that American Well Drilling was selected due to their experience and knowledge of the local geology and the ground water quality. Frank DeCarlo was present to discuss the plan for the drilling and what they are looking for during the drill. Executive Director Hayford discussed that staff is only requesting board approval for the test well portion with an estimate provided by America Drilling Services, Inc. in the amount of \$11,000.00. There was a brief discussion. **Motion by Tabitha Trent to accept the proposal for a test well from American Drilling Services, Inc. in the amount \$11,000.00. Second by Harry Moldenhauer. Vote unanimous (5-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Gilliland addressed Agenda Item No. 32 'NE 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue Engineering RFP'** Executive Director Hayford discussed that requests for Proposals for Engineering Services were due on April 8<sup>th</sup>. On April 14<sup>th</sup>, the OUA review committee met to discuss the RFP's received and prepare an initial ranking. Executive Director Hayford discussed that four firms responded: Kimley-Horn, CHA Solutions, Craig A. Smith & Associates and Erdman Anthony of Florida. The committee utilized the RFP as a guideline and the individual survey evaluation forms. Based upon the merits of each proposal, the committee developed a ranking. Executive Director Hayford explained that based on the ranking, Craig A. Smith & Associates had two 1<sup>st</sup> place rankings while Kimley Horn and CHA each had one. There was a brief discussion. **Motion by Harry Moldenhauer to accept the ranking and develop a scope of work and fee schedule with Craig A. Smith & Associates to be brought back for board review and approval. Second by Steven Nelson. Vote unanimous (5-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Gilliland addressed Agenda Item No. 33 'Improvements to Lift Station NW 15 Bid Award'** Executive Director Hayford discussed that 99% of wastewater flows through NW-15 and was built in 2001-2002. The SWSA will be adding another 500 plus services to the system. Executive Director Hayford discussed that funding for the project is from grants and appropriations. Executive Director Hayford discussed that on April 7<sup>th</sup>, bids were received for the Improvements to Lift Station NW-15. Staff received three bids ranging from a low of \$2,556,385.65 to a high of \$3,437,068.00, with the apparent low bidder being Florida Utility Systems. There was a brief discussion. **Motion by Tabitha Trent to approve the award to Florida Utility Solutions, LLC in the amount of \$2,556,385.65 and authorize the execution of the Notice of Award. Second by Steven Nelson. Vote unanimous (5-0), motion carried.**

**Motion by Tabitha Trent to authorize staff to execute the appropriate documents and issue the Notice to Proceed, provided that the contractor submits the required documentation. Second by Steven Nelson. Vote unanimous (5-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Gilliland addressed Agenda Item No. 34 'Southwest 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue Vacuum Sewer Project – Phase I'** Executive Director Hayford discussed that on April 7<sup>th</sup> staff received six bids. The bids ranged from \$4,728,321.51 to a high of \$5,582,598.25. Executive Director Hayford discussed that there will be some out of pocket monies as the FDEP grant WG104 has allocated \$4,273,000 for construction. Executive Director Hayford reviewed the bid tabulation, indicating the Marmar Construction was the apparent low bidder. The engineer of record, Jeff Sumner was present to answer questions from the Board. Mr. Sumner discussed that Marmar Construction, Inc. would be the general contractor and the vacuum work will be sub-contracted to Go Underground. There was a brief discussion. **Motion by Tabitha Trent to approve the award to Marmar Construction, Inc. in the amount of \$4,728,321.51 and authorize the execution of the Notice of Award. Second by Steven Nelson. Vote unanimous (5-0), motion carried.**

**Motion by Tabitha Trent to authorize staff to execute the appropriate documents and issue the Notice to Proceed, provided that the contractor submits the required documentation. Second by Steven Nelson. Vote unanimous (5-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Gilliland addressed Agenda Item No. 35 'VPS #4 Group C Bid'** Executive Director Hayford discussed that on April 9<sup>th</sup>, seven bids were and opened. Group C is for the connection of 10 homes and bids ranged from \$77,936.00 up to \$174,029.25, with Meeks Plumbing, Inc. submitting the low bid in the amount of \$77,936.00. Executive Director Hayford discussed the variances in contractors bid pricing. *Steve Conteaguero out at 9:34 A.M.* Executive Director Hayford discussed that Meeks Plumbing, Inc. has completed a similar project in St. Lucie County. *Steve Conteaguero in at 9:36 A.M.* There was a brief discussion. **Motion by Harry Moldenhauer to approve the bid from Meek's Plumbing, Inc. in the amount of \$77,936.00 for the VPS #4 Group C Septic to Sewer Project. Second by Steven Nelson. Vote unanimous (5-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Gilliland addressed Agenda Item No. 36 'VPS #5 Group G Bid'** Executive Director Hayford discussed that Group G is for the connection of 17 homes. On April 9<sup>th</sup>, seven bids were received and opened with bids ranging from \$87,915.00 up to \$390,490. Meeks Plumbing, Inc. submitted the low bid in the amount of \$77,936.00. Executive Director Hayford discussed that these lots are smaller in size and less feet of piping. There was a brief discussion. **Motion by Steven Nelson to approve the bid from Meek's Plumbing, Inc. in the amount of \$87,915.00 for the VPS #5 Group G Septic to Sewer Project. Second by Steve Hargraves. Vote unanimous (5-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Gilliland addressed Agenda Item No. 37 'SWSA Grant Disbursement'** Executive Director Hayford discussed that there are approximately 515 connections to be made in the SWSA collection system services by Vacuum Pump Stations #4 and #5. The OUA has available two different grants which can be used to assist the homeowners in the financial cost to connect, Grant WG105 in the amount of \$2,500,000 and TMDL grant in the amount of \$750,000. Executive Director Hayford explained that the grant funding can only be used to make connections from the house and the streetside connection as well as the pump out and abandonment of the septic tank. Some of the funds have already been used for the Taylor Creek Isles and Mallard Landing projects. Executive Director Hayford discussed that based upon the 515 connections to be made in the SWSA Project 2 and if the \$2,191,183.74 is directed for use, this means there is approximately \$4,250.00 per house. Executive Director Hayford discussed

that some grant monies should be retained for other incidental expenses such as engineering, cost to facilitate connections and future upcoming projects. Staff recommends that the reimbursement per house be set at a maximum of \$3,600. For those customers needing financial assistance for the remaining connection costs a Construction Payment Plan could be offered. The minimum monthly payment would be set at \$40.00, a maximum term of 60 months, 3.5% interest rate and a Loan Processing Fee of \$75.00. There was a brief discussion. **Motion by Steven Nelson to approve the disbursement of the grant monies and the terms of the Construction Payment Agreement as presented. Second by Steve Hargraves. Vote unanimous (5-0), motion carried. Tabitha Trent out at 10:00 A.M.**

**Chairperson Gilliland addressed Agenda Item No. 38 'SWSA Project 3 Schedule'** Executive Director Hayford provided the board with an update on the SWSA Project 3 schedule. Based upon the schedule, the project will be out for bid by the end of June and will be due somewhere around August 4<sup>th</sup>. The bids should be presented to the OUA board on August 18<sup>th</sup>, therefore a Notice to Proceed could be issued by September 1<sup>st</sup>. Executive Director Hayford discussed that Big Cedar requested confirmation from the OUA that services would be available to the property located at Okee-Tantie. Big Cedar would build a pump station and tie into the Force Main, thus doing away with the existing pump station on the property. Attorney Conteaguero discussed the title work and letter of availability for Big Cedar Project. This item was for informational purposes only.

**Chairperson Gilliland addressed Agenda Item No. 39 'Project Update'** Executive Director Hayford provided the board with updates on the current OUA projects: SW 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, NW15 Pump Station Rehabilitation. Pine Ridge Park Expansion Projects. This item was for informational purposes only.

**Chairperson Gilliland addressed Agenda Item No. 40 'Department Capital Budget Update'** Executive Director Hayford reviewed the capital budget for each department. *Steve Hargraves out at 10:00 A.M.* Chairperson Gilliland inquired as to why the cameras are still in the budget and have not been installed. Executive Director Hayford discussed that some cameras have been installed. The remaining camera installations, such as the inventory room were discussed. Chairperson Gilliland also inquired about the cabinets for the Water Treatment Plant (WTP) and whether or not actual cabinetry is need or would shelving be sufficient. Operations Director Mullis to get with Kevin Rogers to evaluate the actual needs. The board requested that the cameras and WTP Cabinets be brought back after further review. This item was for informational purposes only.


**Chairperson Gilliland addressed Agenda Item No. 41 'Attorney'** Attorney Conteaguero provided the board with updates on Big Cedar, Lakefront Estates User Agreement, Fire Station Donation Agreement, Kyle Upham Civil Case and Employment Agreement.

**Chairperson Gilliland addressed Agenda Item No. 42 'Executive Director'** Executive Director Hayford gave an update on current projects.

**Chairperson Gilliland addressed Agenda Item No. 43 'Items from the Board'** There were none.

**There being no other business, meeting adjourned at 10:35 A.M.**

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE AND BE ADVISED that if a person decided to appeal any decision made by the Okeechobee Utility Authority with respect to any matter considered at this meeting, he/she may need to ensure that verbatim record of the proceeding is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. A video recording of this meeting is on file in the Executive Director's office.

  
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Chairperson

  
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Executive Director (Secretary)