

**OKEECHOBEE UTILITY AUTHORITY  
MEETING MINUTES**

Thursday August 29, 2024 5:30 P.M.  
Okeechobee Utility Authority  
100 SW 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Okeechobee, Florida

**Chairperson Nelson called the meeting to order at 5:30 P.M.**

**Chairperson Nelson determined the voting members and led all participating attendees and visitors in the Pledge of Allegiance.**

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 1, the following Okeechobee Utility Authority Board Members were present:**

**Board Members:**

John Gilliland\*  
Harry Moldenhauer\*  
Steve Nelson\*

**Alternates:**

Glenn Sneider\*\*

**Absent:**

Melanie Anderson  
Tabitha Trent

\*Voting Board Members

\*\*Voting in Tabitha Trent's Place

**OUA Members:**

John Hayford  
Lauriston Hamilton

Greg Kennedy  
Michelle Willoughby

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 2 'Agenda Additions or Deletions' There were none**

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 3 'Meeting Minutes from July 16, 2024.' Motion by Harry Moldenhauer to accept the Meeting Minutes from July 16, 2024 Meeting as presented. Second by John Gilliland. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 4 'Update from Operations Director' Executive Director Hayford provided the board with an update on all departments. Board Member Gilliland asked staff about the transformer for the ozone building. Board Member Gilliland discussed exploring the use solar powered cameras for the security system at the SWTP. *Melanie Anderson in at 5:33 P.M.* Executive Director Hayford discussed that there was a delay in ordering the parts.**

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 5 'Consent Agenda' Motion by John Gilliland to approve the Consent Agenda as presented:**

**Consent Agenda Item No. 6 'Invoice from Kimley Horn and Associates, Inc. -- Lakeview Estates Permit Renewal in the amount of \$1,071.50'**

**Second by Glenn Sneider. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 7 'August 20<sup>th</sup> Consent Agenda'** Executive Director Hayford discussed that the board meeting that was scheduled for August 20<sup>th</sup> was rescheduled due to a lack of a quorum. Executive Director Hayford discussed that staff reached out to Board Members via email requesting if the members were in favor of staff approving the payment of all consent agenda items that were scheduled for consideration at the August 20<sup>th</sup> meeting. Executive Director Hayford discussed that four favorable responses were received and staff proceeded with payment. **Motion by Harry Moldenhauer to ratify the approval of the August 20<sup>th</sup> Consent Agenda. Second by John Gilliland. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 8 'Pine Ridge Park Septic Tank Abandonment'** Executive Director Hayford discussed that staff reached out to Board Members in regards to a request from Hinterland Group, Inc. to provide additional services to connect eleven homes up to the new Pine Ridge Park sewer system. The contractor identified that there is concrete, AC pads, electrical cables and other such home site conflicts. Executive Director Hayford discussed that staff and the engineer have confirmed that there are some conflicts and that the contractor is due some compensation for time and money. Executive Director Hayford discussed that the contractor has provided a cost estimate of \$52,774.11 and time adjustment of 11 days for consideration. Executive Director Hayford discussed that the cost adjustment will be taken out of the Miscellaneous Work Allowance contingency and will not increase the contract price. Executive Director Hayford discussed that the time adjustment can only be modified by a change order. Executive Director Hayford discussed that staff received enough positive responses from the board to approve the payment and change order as requested by Hinterland Group, Inc. **Motion by Harry Moldenhauer to ratify the approval of the Allowance Authorization in the amount of \$52,774.11. Second by Glenn Sneider. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

**Motion by Glenn Sneider to ratify the approval of Change Order for an additional 11 calendar days to the contract. Second by Harry Moldenhauer. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 9 'OUA Vehicle Purchase'** Executive Director Hayford discussed that staff reached out to Board Members via email discussing that an Assistant Executive Director had been hired and that they would need a vehicle. Executive Director Hayford discussed that at the September 2023 Board meeting, the board had authorized the purchase of a Ford Hybrid Maverick from Gilbert Ford for \$26,495. Staff reached out to Gilbert Ford and asked if they had a vehicle similar to the earlier order on the lot. Gilbert Ford did not have one available and it would need to be ordered with a 4-6 month expected delivery. Executive Director Hayford discussed that Vero Beach Ford contacted staff and stated that they had a Maverick available for \$27,015 which was about 2% higher and they could hold it until the board meeting August 20<sup>th</sup>. By the time staff received four favorable responses, the dealership could not hold the vehicle and it was sold. Executive Director Hayford discussed that the dealership was able to locate a similar vehicle for a slight price increase to \$27,560, which was up \$545 from the previous quote. There was a brief discussion. **Motion by John Gilliland to ratify the prior approval to purchase the Ford Maverick Hybrid truck from Mullinax of Vero Beach in the amount of \$27,560.00. Second by Harry Moldenhauer. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 10 'Glades County Franchise Agreement'** Executive Director Hayford discussed the proposed Franchise Agreement with Glades County. Executive

Director Hayford discussed that there were suggested changes by both OUA staff and the OUA Board Attorney. Attorney Conley discussed the proposed service area for the proposed agreement. Executive Director Hayford discussed that Mr. Tim Stanley, Glades County Commissioner was present to discuss the agreement. Mr. Stanley discussed the service area and the Community Development District (CDD) that was issued to Lakefront Estates. Mr. Stanley discussed that the CDD states the developer is to install the water and wastewater utility infrastructure and must connect to a public utility. There was a brief discussion. **Motion by Glenn Sneider to approve the Franchise Agreement with edits and to include the Service Area and CDD. Second by Harry Moldenhauer. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 11 'Finance Report'** Finance Director Hamilton reviewed the Finance Report for period ending July 31, 2024. **Motion by Glenn Sneider to approve the Finance Report for period ending July 31, 2024. Second by John Gilliland. Vote unanimous (4-0). Motion carried.**

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 12 'Review of FY25 Preliminary Budget'** Finance Director Hamilton reviewed the proposed FY25 budget. Finance Director Hamilton discussed the revised preliminary budget deficit is approximately \$190,559. Finance Director Hamilton discussed that the proposed budget was calculated using the assumption of a 5% rate adjustment. Finance Director Hamilton discussed further that the deficit in the proposed budget could be covered by an additional 1.5% rate adjustment. Finance Director Hamilton provided the board with a general overview of the projects and the funding associated. Finance Director Hamilton discussed that staff is recommending a total rate adjustment of 6.5% to be effective October 1, 2024. Finance Director Hamilton provided the board with a dollar value impact to a rate payor after both a 5% and 6.5% rate increase. The impact was demonstrated for a both the average water/wastewater residential customer and non-residential customer. There was a brief discussion. This is for informational purposes only.

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 13 'Invoice from Hinterland Group Inc – Southwest Service Area 2'** Finance Director Hamilton discussed that at the board meeting on July 16, 2024, staff withdrew Item No. 10 (Hinterland Group, Inc – Pay Application #14) from the consent agenda. Finance Director discussed that in collaboration with Hinterland Group, Inc, Sumner Engineering and Consulting, Inc and the USDA, a review of past pay applications concluded that Pay Application #13 required adjustment to account for a miscalculation. Finance Director Hamilton discussed that since Pay Application #13 was already paid, Hinterland and the OUA agreed to exchange checks to correct the excess payment of \$62,259.13. Following the correction of Pay Application #13, the next step was to address the current Pay Application #14, which was withdrawn at the July Board Meeting. Finance Director Hamilton discussed that after revising Pay Application #13, the resulting amount being due for Pay Application #14 was \$335,745.20. Finance Director Hamilton discussed that authorization was solicited and obtained from board members prior to this meeting. There was a brief discussion. **Motion by Glenn Sneider to ratify the exchanging of checks with Hinterland Group Inc. and payment of corrected Pay Application #14 in the amount of \$335,745.20. Second by John Gilliland. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 14 'Paid Time Off – PTO'** Executive Director Hayford discussed that the Board unanimously approved the implementation of a PTO plan, beginning October 1, 2024, replacing the current payment for absence policy of vacation and sick leave. Finance Director Hamilton discussed that the policy states a start date of October 1, 2024 with an annual payout

each September 30<sup>th</sup> to regularize employee accumulated PTO hours carried forward with the maximum of 360 hours. Finance Director Hamilton discussed allowing the employees to carry forward all of their accumulated vacation and sick hours to next year (FY25) and regularize their balances to 360 hours at the end of FY25 or should no employee start the new policy with accumulated balances above the allowed 360 hours. Finance Director Hamilton discussed that under the current policy, while vacation is paid out at a 1:1 ratio, employees are restricted to a conversion rate of 50% of their accumulated sick time after achieving a continuous employment of 10 years or more and leave in good standing. Finance Director discussed that according to present practice, staff can request a payout on their accumulated vacation hours during the fiscal year, but not their accumulated sick time. There was a brief discussion. **Motion by Glenn Sneider to convert accumulated vacation and sick hours to PTO beginning October 1, 2024 and be restricted to 360 hours with the excess hours paid in September 2024. Second by Harry Moldenhauer. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

**Motion by Glenn Sneider convert sick time to PTO at a rate of 1:1 hour. Second by John Gilliland. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

**Motion by Glenn Sneider to not allow employees to request payout of PTO during the fiscal year. Second by Harry Moldenhauer. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 15 ‘Surplus Items’** Executive Director Hayford discussed that staff had received the last vehicle that was ordered, which is a 2024 Ford Maverick to replace Meter Reader (Unit #411), which was a 2016 Ford F-150. Executive Director Hayford discussed that the WWTP has two units that have some age and issues and need replacing. Executive Director Hayford discussed that Unit #411 is in better shape than either one of the WWTP units. Executive Director Hayford discussed the SWTP had a spare vehicle (Unit #445), which is also in better shape than either one of the WWTP units. Executive Director Hayford discussed that staff decided to transfer Unit #411 and Unit #445 to the WWTP to replace the two units that have issues. Executive Director Hayford requests that Unit #434 (2008 Ford F-150) and Unit #510 (2000 Ford F-150) be deemed as surplus. **Motion by Glenn Sneider to approve staff to surplus and sell Unit #434 and Unit #510 to the highest bidder. Second by John Gilliland. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 16 ‘Mallard Landing Emergency Manhole Replacement’** Executive Director Hayford discussed that the Mallard Landing project is under construction. The contractor is installing both new water and wastewater lines as well as connecting to existing OUA utilities. Executive Director Hayford discussed that the contractor attempted to tie into an OUA manhole just outside of OUA pump station NW4. Executive Director Hayford discussed that as the subcontractor was drilling the pilot hole, it was determined that the manhole was in poor condition and was only about 1 ¾” thick. Manhole walls are typically 6” thick. Executive Director Hayford discussed that the contractor, engineer and OUA staff determined that the manhole was beyond repair and needed to be replacement. Staff requested a quote from Centerline Inc. and received a quote for replacement in the amount of \$47,643.01. Executive Director Hayford discussed that due to this being an active manhole, gravity system and pump station, with failure evident it was determined that this manhole needed replacement now due to its weakened and exposed state. **Motion by Glenn Sneider to ratify the emergency approval of this repair expense by Centerline, Inc. in the amount of \$47,643.01. Second by Harry Moldenhauer. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 17 ‘Mallard Landing Engineering Proposal’**

Executive Director Hayford discussed that the Mallard Landing Sewer Expansion RFP for engineering services was advertised in the local paper, the OUA social media accounts and by direct solicitation. Executive Director Hayford discussed that the RFP's are due to be delivered to the OUA office by September 10, 2024. Executive Director Hayford discussed that in the recent past and OUA Board Member was part of the review committee to review the RFP's and to prepare an initial ranking of the RFP's. Executive Director Hayford discussed that the once the initial review is completed, the RFP's and ranking will be brought to the full OUA Board for review and consideration. Board Member Steven Nelson offered his services to the committee.

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 18 'Kings Bay Water Main Extension'** Executive Director Hayford discussed that the Kings Bay US 441SE Water Main Extension was designed to serve several businesses on the northside of the road while being able to serve several RV Parks on the lakeside of the road. Executive Director Hayford discussed that Holtz Consulting Engineers, Inc. has reviewed the bids for compliance with the bid documents and provided references. Executive Director Hayford discussed that the engineer has provided staff with a written recommendation for award. Executive Director Hayford discussed that as per bid documents, the OUA is to furnish some of the material to be utilized in the construction of the project. **Motion by Glenn Sneider to accept the recommendation of award to B & B Site Development as presented by Holtz Consulting Engineers, Inc. Second by Harry Moldenhauer. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

**Motion by Glenn Sneider to authorize the OUA Board Chairman and staff to execute the Notice of Award to B & B Site Development. Second by Harry Moldenhauer. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

**Motion by Glenn Sneider to approve the purchase of materials from Core & Main in the amount of \$101,429.35, Second by John Gilliland. Vote Unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

**Motion by Glenn Sneider to approve the OUA Board Chairman and staff to execute project documents and issue the Notice to Proceed once the contractor provides the necessary pre-construction documentation. Second by Harry Moldenhauer. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 19 'State Road 78 West Water Main Improvements – Phase 1'** Executive Director Hayford discussed that initially the project by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) was to include guard rail posts which impacted an existing 8-inch water main. Executive Director Hayford discussed that FDOT notified the OUA that the guard rails have been removed from this project and could be installed at a later date. Executive Director Hayford discussed that there is still the requirement to meet the demand of the Lakefront Estates Project. Executive Director Hayford discussed that the existing water mains (8-inch and 6-inch) will not meet the current demand as well as the growth from Bass Pro and Lakefront Estates. Executive Director Hayford discussed the project intent to remove the existing main and replace with either a 12-inch or 16-inch water main is still the focus. Executive Director Hayford discussed that the OUA is to provide the basic piping for the project. Executive Director Hayford discussed that the prepurchase of the materials is to save on taxes, overhead and profit fees as well as guarantee the materials are available for construction. Executive Director discussed that during the design effort the developer for Lakefront Estates contacted the OUA concerning the upsizing of the piping to meet the demands of the project. After testing conducted by the engineer it was determined that the proposed 12-inch water main need to be upsized to 16-inch.

Executive Director Hayford discussed that staff prepared a Cost Sharing Agreement for both OUA and the Lake front Estates developer. There was a brief discussion. **Motion by Glenn Sneider to approve the purchase of materials for the project. Second by Harry Moldenhauer. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 20 'Taylor Creek Isles Septic to Sewer Improvement Project'** Executive Director Hayford discussed that Wind River Environmental, LLC. (dba Cookes Plumbing and Septic Services) submitted a bid for the TCI Septic to Sewer project in the amount of \$177,503.26. Executive Director Hayford discussed that the bid was accepted and a Notice of Award was issued to Cookes. The engineer, Craig A. Smith & Associates, Inc, has reviewed the items and submitted a recommendation to execute the agreement and issue the Notice to Proceed. **Motion by Glenn Sneider to accept the engineer's recommendation and approve the execution of all documents by the Board Chairman and issue the Notice to Proceed. Second by John Gilliland. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 21 'Ozone Water Chiller Rental'** Executive Director Hayford discussed that the fresh water taken from the water main on the treatment plant site and used to cool down the ozone generators has been very warm lately. The water is above a temperature that efficiently cools the generators. Executive Director Hayford discussed that staff have been investigating a permanent fix to this issue. Executive Director Hayford discussed that staff engaged Trane Rental Services to provide a temporary chilling unit. Executive Director Hayford discussed that staff will continue to investigate a more permanent solution for pre-chilling the cool down water. Executive Director Hayford reviewed the rental agreement and a one-time charge for delivery, removal, and installation. There was a brief discussion. **Motion by Glenn Sneider to approve the monthly rental cost of \$5,000 per month and the additional setup charge of \$10,000 to Trane Rental Services. Second by John Gilliland. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 22 'Pine Ridge Park Remote Pit Controllers'** Executive Director Hayford discussed that the Pine Ridge Park Septic to Sewer Project is nearing completion. Executive Director Hayford discussed that the vacuum pits are near the roadside swales. The county has been actively cleaning or replacing culverts in the area to help the drainage system operate. Executive Director Hayford discussed that can be some flooding of the vacuum pits, when the lids are submerged. Executive Director Hayford discussed that there is a control mechanism in the pit and the unit needs to "breathe", and when submerged the unit fails to operate. Executive Director Hayford discussed that staff was to move these controllers into air vents serving the vacuum pits, which were installed during construction. Executive Director Hayford discussed that if the controller is removed from the vacuum pit, flooding will not cause any problem. Executive Director Hayford reviewed a quote that staff received from FloVac for the parts needed and labor to install up to 58 remote controllers in the existing air vents. **Motion by Glann Sneider to approve the quote from FloVac, Inc in the amount of \$30,420. Second by Harry Moldenhauer. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 23 'Wastewater NW-15 Pump Station'** Executive Director Hayford discussed that NW-15 is the regional pump station that receives approximately 95% of the flow from OUA service heading to the Cemetery Road WWTF. Executive Director Hayford discussed that in 2025, SWSA Project will be coming online adding approximately another 500 homes to the approximate 4,500 connections that are now directed through NW-15. In late 2025 to early 2026 the

SWSA Project 3 will be coming online adding another 500-1,000 connections. Executive Director Hayford discussed that NW-15 is nearing 25 years old, therefore it is time to review the historic flows seen by the station as well as the future expected flows to be added. The engineering team for the SWSA Project as asked to put together a scope of work and fee schedule since the flow from the SWSA project will be the future flow impacting NW-15. There was a brief discussion. **Motion by Glenn Sneider to approve the additional work authorization provided by Sumner Engineering & Consulting, Inc. in the amount of \$48,090. Second by Harry Moldenhauer. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 24 'WW Pump Station SCADA Upgrades'**

Executive Director Hayford discussed that several of the wastewater pump stations are monitored by a SCADA system. This system monitors power, wet well levels, long run times on pumps and generator status. Executive Director Hayford discussed that many of these units have been operational for more than 10 years. Executive Director Hayford discussed that it is time to overhaul and refurbish these stations. Locher Environmental technology, LLC has been the sole source SCADA provider for the Southeast region. Executive Director Hayford was asked to review the field SCADA stations and the main office unit located at the SWTP. Executive Director Hayford discussed the proposal provided by Locher Environmental technology, LLC. **Motion by Glenn Sneider to approve both proposals by Locher Environmental Technology, LLC in the amounts of \$47,797 and \$37,246. Second by Harry Moldenhauer. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 25 'Capital Connection Charge Review'** Executive Director Hayford discussed the OUA Board has approved a 75% reduction to the capital connection and installation charges paid by customers. Executive Director Hayford provided a recap of the connections made and the capital connection charges received by the OUA. The fees that would have been recovered if the rate were not set to the 75% reduction. Executive Director Hayford discussed that these fees are used for capital purchases, projects and/or debt reduction. Executive Director Hayford discussed that looking forward there is talk of developments happening in the near future. Executive Director reviews the difference in fees generated with and without the 75% reduction in fees. Executive Director Hayford discussed that each year the OUA Board has to vote on the rate reduction that is good for one year. The current rate reduction sunsets on September 30, 2024. Executive Director Hayford discussed that if the board takes no action, the reduction will sunset on October 1, 2024 the rates will revert to 100%. There was a brief discussion. **Motion by Glenn Sneider to allow the rate reduction to sunset on September 30, 2024. Second by Harry Moldenhauer.** Board Member Moldenhauer questioned what to do about future large projects coming on line and their rates. Executive Director Hayford explained that the board could elect to provide a rate reduction at the time of such a large project or change the structure of the current payment plans offered by the OUA. **Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 26 'OUA Legal Services'** Executive Director Hayford discussed that Mr. Conely has advised that he will be retiring as OUA Board Attorney. Executive Director Hayford discussed that a RFQ was prepared. **Motion by Glenn Sneider to approve the RFQ for legal services as presented, to advertise accordingly and bring responses back to the board for discussion. Second by John Gilliland. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 27 'Public Comments'** There were none.

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 28 'Items from the Attorney'** Attorney Conely discussed that authorization is needed to execute a Quit Claim Deed to the Culbreth Family Park LLC to

correct an easement. **Motion by Glenn Sneider to authorize the OUA Chairperson to execute a Quit Claim Deed to Culbreth Family Park LLC to correct an error in an easement. Second by John Gilliland. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

Attorney Conely discussed that evaluation for the Executive Director were sent out. Attorney Conley discussed that as of the date of this meeting not all evaluations have been returned. Attorney Conely requests from the board to waive evaluations and issue the merit increase. **Motion by Glenn Sneider to waive evaluations for the Executive Director and approve the 3% increase per contract. Second by John Gilliland. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 29 'Items from the Executive Director'** Executive Director Hayford gave an update on current projects. Executive Director Hayford introduces Mr. Greg Kennedy, new Assistant Executive Director, to the board.

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 30 'Items from the Board'** Chairperson Nelson requested that the OUA participate in the Christmas Parade this year.

**There being no other business, meeting adjourned at 7:43 P.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 CD 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)