

OKEECHOBEE UTILITY AUTHORITY

MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, April 16, 2024 8:30 A.M.

Okeechobee Utility Authority

100 SW 5th Avenue

Okeechobee, Florida

Vice Chairperson Gilliland called the meeting to order at 8:32 A.M.

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

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

Board Members:

John Gilliland*

Steve Nelson*

Tabitha Trent*

Alternates:

Melanie Anderson**

Glenn Sneider

Absent:

Harry Moldenhauer

Tommy Clay resigned on April 12, 2024

*Voting Board Members

**Voting in Harry Moldenhauer's absence

OUA Members:

John Hayford

Lauriston Hamilton

Jamie Mullis

Tom Conely

Michelle Willoughby

Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 2 'Agenda Additions or Deletions' Executive Director Hayford discusses that staff received an invoice from CHA. The invoice is for the Pine Ridge Park Utility System Upgrade in the amount of \$9,386.50. Motion by Tabitha Trent to approve the invoice from CHA in the amount of \$9,386.50. Second by Melanie Anderson. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.

Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 3 'Meeting Minutes from March 19, 2024.' Motion by John Gilliland to accept the Meeting Minutes from March 19, 2024 as presented. Second by Tabitha Trent. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.

Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 4 'Employee Recognition' Chairperson Nelson recognized William Hardman and Raul Marrero for their 5 years of service to the OUA. William Hardman and Raul Marrero were not present for the recognition. Attorney Conely advised the board would need a motion to approve the recognition and issuance of a longevity payment. Motion by Melanie Anderson to approve the recognition and longevity payment for William Hardman and Raul Marrero. Second by John Gilliland. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.

Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 5 ‘Department Supervisor Updates’

SWTP: Kevin Rogers was not present.

Maintenance: Chris Weeks advises that there is currently one vacancy and the position is being advertised.

Administration: Kristy Arnold advised the board that the department is fully staffed and there are no other concerns at this time.

WWTP: Jamie Gamiotea advised there is a current vacancy for an Assistant Wastewater Treatment Plant Supervisor.

Jamie Mullis gave an overall update of all departments.

Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 6 ‘Consent Agenda’ Attorney Conely requests to pull Consent Agenda Item No. 17 due to conflict of interest, Tabitha Trent will abstain from voting on item No. 17. Motion by Melanie Anderson to approve the Consent Agenda items 7-16 and 18-20 as presented:

- Consent Agenda Item No. 7 ‘Invoice from Sumner Engineering & Consulting, Inc – SW Wastewater Service Area Project (Part E) in the amount of \$20,842.50’**
- Consent Agenda Item No. 8 ‘Invoice from Sumner Engineering & Consulting, Inc – SW 5th Avenue LPSS Design and Permitting in the amount of \$16,292.00’**
- Consent Agenda Item No. 9 ‘Invoice from Anderson Andre Consulting Engineers, Inc – SWSA Project 2 Vacuum Collection System in the amount of \$8,795.00’**
- Consent Agenda Item No. 10 ‘Invoice from Anderson Andre Consulting Engineers, Inc – SW 24th Avenue AC Pipe Removal, Testing Services in the amount of \$6,127.50’**
- Consent Agenda Item No. 11 ‘Invoices from Hinterland Group, Inc. – SW 24th Avenue Asbestos Concrete pipe Removal in the amounts of \$139,566.88 and \$42,476.87’**
- Consent Agenda Item No. 12 ‘Invoice from Hinterland Group, Inc. – SWSA Project 2 Vacuum Collection System in the amount of \$507,927.60’**
- Consent Agenda Item No. 13 ‘Invoice from Hinterland Group, Inc. – Pine Ridge Park Utility Improvements in the amount of \$186,061.33’**
- Consent Agenda Item No. 13 ‘Invoice from CHA – Vac Station #2 Generator Replacement in the amount of \$10,323.00’**
- Consent Agenda Item No. 14 ‘Invoices from Holtz Consulting Engineers, Inc. – SW 24th Avenue AC Pipe Removal in the amount of \$1,776.00’**
- Consent Agenda Item No. 15 ‘Invoice from Holtz Consulting Engineers, Inc. – SR 78 Watermain Improvements in the amount of \$10,219.50’**
- Consent Agenda Item No. 16 ‘Invoice from Kimley Horn and Associates, Inc. – Treasure Island Septic to Sewer Project in the amount of \$45,793.30’**
- Consent Agenda Item No. 18 ‘Allowance Authorization #5 in the amount of \$9,495.56’**

Consent Agenda Item No. 19 'Invoice from Thorn Run Partners in the amount of \$3,500.00'

Consent Agenda Item No. 20 'Invoice from MacVicar in the amount of \$250.00'

Second by John Gilliland. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.

Chairperson Nelson addressed Consent Agenda Item No. 17 'SouthState Bank-Interim Financing Loan Interest Payment'. Motion by Melanie Anderson to approve the SouthState Bank – Interim Financing Loan Payment in the amount of \$21,614.59. Second by John Gilliland. Vote unanimous (4-0, Tabitha Trent abstains from vote, Glenn Sneider votes for Tabitha Trent), motion carried.

Executive Director Hayford requests for the Board to move to Agenda Item No. 23 to discuss the RAS Pump Purchase for the Cemetery Road WWTF as Jamie Gamiotea needs to exit the meeting early.

Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 23 'RAS Pump Purchase Cemetery Road WWTF' Executive Director Hayford discussed that staff requested quotes for replacing one of the three return activated sludge pumps. The pumps pump activated sludge back to the secondary treatment units. Executive Director Hayford discussed that all of the pumps are in a failing condition and will need to be replaced. Executive Director Hayford discussed that staff received quotes from three vendors; Xylem, Barney's and Lift Station Pump & Equipment. Executive Director Hayford discussed that staff recommends going with the supplier that seemed the most responsive, fastest delivery time and has a good working relationship with the OUA. **Motion by Tabitha Trent to approve the purchase of one pump from Lift Station Pump & Equipment in the amount of \$23,099.00. Second by John Gilliland. Vote unanimous (4-0). Motion carried.**

2nd Vice Chairperson Trent requests the Board address all items that require voting first due to her early exit of today's meeting.

Glenn Sneider out at 8:52 A.M.

Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 26 'Paid Holiday' Executive Director Hayford discussed that in the Evergreen report the issue of paid holidays by OUA peers were highlighted with an average of 11 days paid holidays. Executive Director Hayford discussed a comparison listing between OUA paid holidays and 2024 Federal holidays. Executive Director Hayford discussed that although the table identifies 10 approved holidays, as per OUA Employee Handbook. It should be noted that only scheduled plant operators and maintenance staff on call received a benefit via a premium pay for work done on Easter Sunday, while the remainder of the staff are generally off on a Sunday. Executive Director Hayford discusses that in an attempt to increase the number of paid holidays by the OUA, staff recommends approval of two additional holidays. There was a brief discussion. **Motion by Tabitha Trent to approve an additional personal choice day. Second by Melanie Anderson. Vote unanimous (4-0). Motion carried.**

Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 27 'PTO (Paid Time Off)' Executive Director Hayford discussed that currently full-time employees earn both annual leave and sick leave. Executive Director Hayford discussed employees earn annual leave based upon hours worked and commensurate to their years of service. The amount of annual leave employees receives each year increases with the length of their active employment. Up to 240 hours of annual leave may be carried over to the next fiscal year. Executive Director Hayford discussed that as a part of the employee benefit review, consideration was given to a paid time off (PTO) evaluation in lieu of employees earning annual leave and sick leave.

Executive Director Hayford discussed that based upon current policy, employees are entitled to full use of their sick if used as sick time. They are not allowed to cash in their banked sick time on a dollar-for-dollar basis. Executive Director Hayford discussed that based upon the latest tabulation of OUA personnel sick time, a cash basis of this time equated to an expense of approximately \$117,000.00 as allocated to banked sick time. Executive Director Hayford discussed that rather than an accrual rate based upon actual hours worked during the year, apply a tired annual PTO amount to each full-time employee at the beginning of the fiscal year. Executive Director Hayford discussed that up to 240 hours would be allowed to carry over at the end of each fiscal year. Any time in excess of that amount would be paid out to the employee prior to September 30th. Board Member Melanie Anderson asks about catastrophic illness or injury and whether an employee would be required to exhaust their PTO bank. Executive Director Hayford discussed that the OUA does provide employees with long term disability as well as offering short term disability and AFLAC in the cafeteria plan benefit choices. **Motion by Steve Nelson to approve the amendment to the OUA Employee Manual to reflect the 180/220/260 PTO Plan. Second by John Gilliland. Vote unanimous (4-0). Motion carried.**

Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 28 ‘Employee Merit & COLA Payment’ Executive Director Hayford discussed that in the current approved FY24 Budget there are two line items that have been delayed due to the Evergreen Solutions, LLC report. The two items were a proposed across the board \$1.00 per hour general salary adjustment for all OUA employees and a merit evaluation and associated salary adjustment totaling 2.5% of the labor budget. **Motion by Tabitha Trent to approve the \$1.00 per hour pay increase with an effective payroll date of April 12, 2024 and approval of the merit evaluation and associated salary adjustments for staff with the exception of the Executive Director. Second by Melanie Anderson. Vote unanimous (4-0). Motion carried.**

Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 29 ‘Proposed Glades County Franchise Agreement’ Executive Director Hayford discussed that the OUA still does not have a signed Franchise Agreement with Glades County. Executive Director Hayford discussed that Glades County approved a Community Development District (CDD) with Lakefront Estates. The CDD authorizes Lakefront Estates to provide its own water and wastewater services to the residents. There was a brief discussion. **Motion by Melanie Anderson to authorize the board attorney to send a letter to Glades County requesting consideration of a new franchise agreement. Second by John Gilliland. Vote unanimous (4-0). Motion carried.**

Executive Director Hayford discussed the current service area of the OUA. There was a brief discussion regarding service boundaries in the proposed Franchise Agreement. **Motion by Tabitha Trent to stop the service area at the SFWMD access road. Second by Melanie Anderson. Vote unanimous (4-0). Motion carried.**

Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 30 ‘LPQ008 Amendment 4’ Executive Director Hayford discussed that the LPQ Amendment adds the \$2,750,000 that was added per Legislative directive. Executive Director Hayford discussed that amendment adjusts the Task End Dates as well. **Motion by Melanie Anderson to approved Amendment No. 4 and approves the Board Chairman to execute the same. Second by John Gilliland Vote unanimous (4-0). Motion carried.**

Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 22 ‘Surplus Vehicle’ Executive Director Hayford advised that the board approved the purchase of vehicles for the maintenance department. Executive Director Hayford requests that the 2007 Chevy 3500 (Unit #531) be deemed as surplus as the replacement

vehicle was received and placed into service. **Motion by Tabitha Trent to declare the vehicle presented as surplus and authorize staff to sell the vehicle. Second by Melanie Anderson. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 24 ‘WWTF Emergency Electrical Wiring Repair’ Executive Director Hayford discussed that a segment of wiring in a conduit between two pull boxes shorted out and burned. The wiring provided and electrical feed to some blowers. The blowers are the source of air to a tank at the treatment plant. Executive Director Hayford discussed that staff tried to contact two different suppliers, with one vendor responding. Executive Director Hayford discussed that this was an emergency repair and could not wait for a regular meeting for the OUA Board to review, discuss and approve this expenditure. Executive Director Hayford discussed that as an emergency purchase provision, the Executive Director authorized the purchase. **Motion by Tabitha Trent to ratify the purchase and installation of the “blower motor wiring” to Close Power, Inc. in the amount of \$28,000.00. Second by Melanie Anderson. Vote unanimous (4-0). Motion carried. Tabitha Trent out at 9:34 A.M.**

Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 21 ‘Finance Report’ Finance Director Hamilton reviewed the Finance Report for period ending March 31, 2024. **Motion by Melanie Anderson to approve the Finance Report for period ending March 31, 2024. Second by John Gilliland. Vote unanimous (3-0). Motion carried.**

Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 25 ‘April 2024 Workshop Review’ Executive Director Hayford reviews the items that were discussed at the workshop on April 11, 2024. This item in for information only.

Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 31 ‘Public Comments’ Jeff Sumner updates the board on current projects. Frank Irby spoke to the board with a few suggestions about microphones and the PTO policy.

Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 32 ‘Items from the Attorney’ There were none

Chairperson Clay addressed Agenda Item No. 33 ‘Items from the Executive Director’ Executive Director Hayford gave an update on current projects.

Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 34 ‘Items from the Board’ There were none.

There being no other business, meeting adjourned at 9:59 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 CD recording of this meeting is on file in the Executive Director’s office.



Chairperson



Executive Director (Secretary)