

**OKEECHOBEE UTILITY AUTHORITY**  
**WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES**  
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR INTERVIEWS**

Monday, April 6, 2026 8:30 A.M.

Okeechobee Utility Authority  
 100 SW 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
 Okeechobee, Florida

**The Okeechobee Utility Authority Board of Directors met to conduct interviews for the upcoming Executive Director vacancy.**

**Vacancy advertisement was posted to the OUA website (ouafl.com) and social media platforms.**

**The following members were present:**

**Board Members:**

John Gilliland  
 Steve Hargraves  
 Harry Moldenhauer  
 Tabitha Trent

**Absent:**

Melanie Anderson  
 Jamie Gamiotea  
 Steve Nelson  
 Gleen Sneider

**OUA Members:**

John Hayford, Executive Director  
 Tammie Finch, HR Manager  
 Michelle Willoughby, Executive Secretary

There are five scheduled interviews:

Chad Rucks  
 Greg Kennedy  
 Lauriston Hamilton  
 Xiongfei Xie  
 Jennifer Wheeler

The interview process consisted of each candidate providing an opening statement and self-introduction, followed by a question-and-answer session with Board Members. Upon completion of the questions, each candidate was given the opportunity to present a closing statement.

Four candidate interviews were conducted in person, while one interview was conducted virtually via Microsoft Teams.

During the meeting, Board Members engaged in a structured interview process for candidates applying for the vacant Executive Director position. Each candidate was asked a series of questions designed to assess their professional experience, leadership abilities, and vision for the Authority. Board Members also asked follow-up questions as needed to clarify responses and gain a deeper understanding of each candidate's qualifications.

The first interview, Chad Rucks, started at 8:30am. HR Manager, Tammie Finch, introduced the candidate and prompted the candidate to give a brief self-introduction.

After the introduction was completed, the interview was conducted. Mr. Rucks was given the opportunity to clarify or add any comments. Interview ended at 9:40am. The Board thanked Mr. Rucks for participation. Mr. Rucks was advised that the ranking will be determined at the April 21, 2026 regular meeting.

The second interview, Greg Kennedy, started at 9:50am. Executive Director John Hayford, excused himself from the interview process of Mr. Kennedy. HR Manager, Tammie Finch, introduced the candidate and prompted the candidate to give a brief self-introduction. After the introduction was completed, the interview was conducted. Mr. Kennedy was given the opportunity to clarify or add any comments. Interview ended at 11:05am. The Board thanked Mr. Kennedy for participation. Mr. Kennedy was advised that the ranking will be determined at the April 21, 2026 regular meeting.

The third interview, Lauriston Hamilton, started at 11:10am. Executive Director John Hayford, excused himself from the interview process of Mr. Lauriston. HR Manager, Tammie Finch, introduced the candidate and prompted the candidate to give a brief self-introduction and advised that the ranking will be determined at the April 21, 2026 regular meeting.

After the introduction was completed, the interview was conducted. Mr. Hamilton was given the opportunity to clarify or add any comments. Interview ended at 11:55am. The Board thanked Mr. Hamilton for participation. Mr. Hamilton was advised that the ranking will be determined at the April 21, 2026 regular meeting.

The fourth interview, Xiongfei Xie, started at 1:00pm. HR Manager, Tammie Finch, introduced the candidate and prompted the candidate to give a brief self-introduction. After the introduction was completed, the interview was conducted. Mr. Xie was given the opportunity to clarify or add any comments. Interview ended at 1:40pm. The Board thanked Mr. Xie for participation. Mr. Xie was advised that the ranking will be determined at the April 21, 2026 regular meeting.

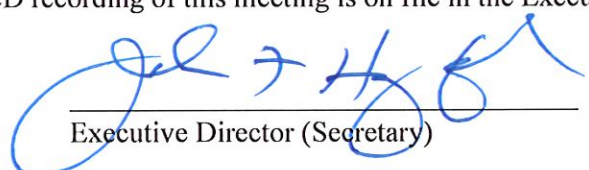
The fifth interview, Jennifer Wheeler, started at 2:00pm via Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting. HR Manager, Tammie Finch, introduced the candidate and prompted the candidate to give a brief self-introduction. After the introduction was completed, the interview was conducted. Ms. Wheeler was given the opportunity to clarify or add any comments. Interview ended at 2:30pm. The Board thanked Ms. Wheeler for participation. Ms. Wheeler was advised that the ranking will be determined at the April 21, 2026 regular meeting.

Workshop ended at 2:40pm.

Video recordings of each interview are available at the OUA office upon request.

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)