

**OKEECHOBEE UTILITY AUTHORITY**

**MEETING MINUTES**

Tuesday, May 19, 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\*

Harry Moldenhauer\*

Steven Nelson\*

**Alternates:**

Melanie Anderson

Jamie Gamiotea

Glenn Sneider\*\*

**Absent:**

Steve Hargraves

Tabitha Trent

\*Voting Board Members

\*\* Voting in Tabitha Trent's absence

**OUA Members:**

John Hayford

Greg Kennedy

Lauriston Hamilton

Jamie Mullis

Steve Conteaguero

Michelle Willoughby

**Chairperson Gilliland addressed Agenda Item No. 2 'Agenda Additions and Deletions' Executive Director Hayford discussed that there were four additions to the agenda; Item No. 2A. 'Okeechobee County Fire Station', Item No. 2B. 'NE 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue Engineering RFP', Item No. 2C. 'Project 2 Septic to Sewer Connections', and Item No. 2D. 'Invoice from PRP Construction, LLC – Mallard Landing Gravity Sewer Expansion'.**

**Chairperson Gilliland addressed Agenda Item No. 2A 'Okeechobee County Fire Station' Executive Director Hayford discussed that Assistant County Administrator, Justin Nelson was present to discuss the property for the proposed Fire Station on SR78 West. Mr. Nelson discussed issues with the terms of the property transfer for the OUA property. Mr. Nelson discussed that the Reverter Clause would not align with the terms of their grant. Mr. Nelson reviewed the need for the entire 5-acre parcel. Board Member Nelson asked Mr. Nelson about the timeline for the grant. Mr. Nelson informed the board that the grant requires land acquisition with 18 months. County Commissioner Hazellief addressed the board explaining that there was a possibility of a Sheriff Substation on the same property. There was a brief discussion. Motion by Steven Nelson to approve the removal of Section 2, change the property donation from 3 to 5 acres, a 10-year reverter clause, demolition of structures and legal fees to be paid by the county. Second by Jamie Gamiotea. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

*Chairperson Gilliland advised that Agenda Item No. 26 would be discussed after Agenda Item 2A. to allow for the employee to report to work.*

**Chairperson Gilliland addressed Agenda Item No. 26 'Employee Recognition' Chairperson Gilliland recognized Clint Mehrer for his 25 years of service to the OUA.**

**Chairperson Gilliland addressed Agenda Item No. 2B 'NE 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue Engineering RFP' Executive Director Hayford discussed that at the April meeting board action directed staff to work with Craig A. Smith & Associates, Inc. to develop a scope of work and fee schedule for the NE 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue Improvements Project. Executive Director Hayford reviewed the project with the board. Operations Director Muliis advised that the project timeline for construction was 6-9 month once permit is issued. There was a brief discussion. Motion by Steven Nelson to accept the proposal from Craig A. Smith & Associates, Inc. in the amount of \$379,899. Second by Harry Moldenhauer. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Gilliland addressed Agenda Item No. 2C 'Project 2 Septic to Sewer Connections' Executive Director Hayford discussed that on May 14<sup>th</sup>, bids were received and opened for three (D, E, and F) groups within VPS #4 and two (H & I) groups within VPS #5. Executive Director Hayford discussed that for VPS #4 Group D three bids were received, and they ranged from a low of \$66,828.00 up to \$98,825.00. Executive Director Hayford discussed that it would appear that a math error in the Fehl Safe Water Systems resulted from them not adding in several driveway repairs. Regardless, their revised bids are still the low bid. There was a brief discussion. Motion by Harry Moldenhauer to approve the bid from Fehl Safe Water Systems bid in the amount of \$68,298.00 for the VPS #4 Group D Septic to Sewer Project. Second by Steven Nelson. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

Executive Director Hayford discussed that for VPS #4 Group E three bids were received, and they ranged from a low of \$66,283.00 up to \$117,300.00. Executive Director Hayford discussed that it would appear that a math error in the Fehl Safe Water Systems resulted from them not adding in several driveway repairs. Regardless, their revised bids are still the low bid. There was a brief discussion. **Motion by Jamie Gamiotea to approve the bid from Fehl Safe Water Systems bid in the amount of \$70,282.96 for the VPS #4 Group E Septic to Sewer Project. Second by Steven Nelson. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

Executive Director Hayford discussed that for VPS #4 Group F three bids were received, and they ranged from a low of \$94,753.00 up to \$162,720.00. Executive Director Hayford discussed that it would appear that a math error in the Fehl Safe Water Systems resulted from them not adding in several driveway repairs. Regardless, their revised bids are still the low bid. There was a brief discussion. **Motion by Steven Nelson to approve the bid from Fehl Safe Water Systems bid in the amount of \$95,241.02 for the VPS #4 Group F Septic to Sewer Project. Second by Harry Moldenhauer. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

Executive Director Hayford discussed that for VPS #5 Group H three bids were received, and they ranged from a low of \$84,147.00 up to \$143,945.00. Executive Director Hayford discussed that it would appear that a math error in the Fehl Safe Water Systems resulted from them not adding in several driveway repairs. Regardless, their revised bids are still the low bid. There was a brief discussion. **Motion by Steven Nelson to approve the bid from Fehl Safe Water Systems bid in the amount of \$84,567.00 for the VPS #5 Group H Septic to Sewer Project. Second by Jamie Gamiotea. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

Executive Director Hayford discussed that for VPS #5 Group I three bids were received, and they ranged from a low of \$72,242.00 up to \$121,820.00. Executive Director Hayford discussed that it would appear that a math error in the Fehl Safe Water Systems resulted from them not adding in several driveway repairs. Regardless, their revised bids are still the low bid. There was a brief discussion. **Motion by Steven Nelson to approve the bid from Fehl Safe Water Systems bid in the amount of \$73,712.00 for**

**the VPS #5 Group I Septic to Sewer Project. Second by Harry Moldenhauer. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Gilliland addressed Agenda Item No. 2D 'Invoice from PRP Construction, LLC – Mallard Landing Gravity Sewer Expansion' Executive Director Hayford discussed that PRP Construction, LLC had submitted the invoice on Monday, May 18, 2026; therefore, it did not make the board package before it was distributed. There was a brief discussion. Motion by Steven Nelson to approve payment of the invoice from PRP Construction, LLC in the amount of \$176,278.50. Second by Harry Moldenhauer. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Gilliland addressed Agenda Item No. 3 'Preliminary Budget – FY27' Motion by Steven Nelson to open the Public Hearing at 8:46A.M. Second by Harry Moldenhauer. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

Finance Director Hamilton gave a brief presentation of the FY27 Preliminary Budget.

**Chairperson Gilliland called for comments from the Public. There were none.**

**Chairperson Gilliland called for comments from the Board. There was a brief discussion concerning the insurance cost increases.**

**Motion by Steven Nelson to close the Public Hearing at 8:59 A.M. Second by Glenn Sneider. Vote unanimous (4-0).**

Executive Director Hayford read Resolution 26-02 by title only.

**Motion by Steven Nelson to adopt the FY27 Preliminary Budget and Resolution 26-02 as presented. Second by Glenn Sneider. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Gilliland addressed Agenda Item No. 4 'Operations of the Okeechobee Utility Authority'**

**Motion by Steven Nelson to open the Public Hearing at 9:02 A.M. Second by Glenn Sneider. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

Presentation of the General Policy and Procedures of the Okeechobee Utility Authority, Resolution 26-03 by Executive Director Hayford. Executive Director Hayford discussed the proposed changes to the resolution.

**Chairperson Gilliland called for comments from the Public. There were none.**

**Chairperson Gilliland called for comments from the Board. There were none.**

**Motion by Steven Nelson to close the Public Hearing at 9:04 A.M. Second by Glenn Sneider. Vote unanimous (4-0).**

Executive Director Hayford discussed that the Loan Processing Fee of \$75.00 was omitted from Section 8(c) of the Resolution and it would need to be brought back after corrections have been made.

**Motion by Glenn Sneider table this agenda item. Second by Steven Nelson. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

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

**Consent Agenda Item No. 6 'Invoice from CHA Solutions – Vacuum Station #2 Generator Replacement in the amount of \$678.00'**

**Consent Agenda Item No. 7 'Invoices from CHA Solutions – Pine Ridge Park Expansion Project in the amount of \$5,675.75 and \$3,161.36'**

**Consent Agenda Item No. 8 'Invoices from CHA Solutions – SWTP Ozone System Upgrade in the amount of \$8,194.00 and \$12,532.00'**

**Consent Agenda Item No. 9 'Invoice from Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. Treasure Island Septic to Sewer Project in the amount of \$70,884.62'**

**Consent Agenda Item No. 10 'Invoice from Sumner Engineering & Consulting, Inc. – NW 15 Rehabilitation in the amount of \$4,594.00'**

- Consent Agenda Item No. 11** ‘Invoice from Sumner Engineering & Consulting, Inc. – NW 15 FDACS Grant in the amount of \$10,000.00’
- Consent Agenda Item No. 12** ‘Invoice from Sumner Engineering & Consulting, Inc. – SW 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue LPSS Design & Permitting in the amount of \$4,621.83’
- Consent Agenda Item No. 13** ‘Invoice from Sumner Engineering & Consulting, Inc. – Okee-Tantie Utility System Improvements in the amount of \$8,631.88’
- Consent Agenda Item No. 14** ‘Invoice from Sumner Engineering & Consulting, Inc. – SWSA Septic to Sewer Connections Phase III Lots (Groups D, E and F) in the amount of \$2,300.00’
- Consent Agenda Item No. 15** ‘Invoice from Sumner Engineering & Consulting, Inc. – SWSA Septic to Sewer Connections Phase III Lots (Groups G, H, and I) in the amount of \$1,940.00’
- Consent Agenda Item No. 16** ‘Invoice from Holtz Consulting Engineers, Inc. - Mallard Landing Gravity Sewer Expansion in the amount of \$2,380.00’
- Consent Agenda Item No. 17** ‘Invoice from Holtz Consulting Engineers, Inc. - State Road 78 Water Main the amount of \$4,792.50’
- Consent Agenda Item No. 18** ‘Invoice from Holtz Consulting Engineers, Inc. – State Road 78 Water Main Phase III in the amount of \$17,862.00’
- Consent Agenda Item No. 19** ‘Invoice from Nason Yeager Harris & Fumero, P.A. – Legal Services in the amount of \$11,365.87’
- Consent Agenda Item No. 20** ‘Invoice form Conely and Conely, P.A. – Legal Services in the amount of \$2,706.25’
- 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 Glenn Sneider. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Gilliland addressed Agenda Item No. 25 ‘Meeting Minutes from April 21, 2026’ Motion by Steven Nelson to approve the meeting minutes from April 21, 2026 as presented. Second by Harry Moldenhauer. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Gilliland addressed Agenda Item No. 27 ‘Public Comments’** Jeff Sumner with Sumner Engineering & Consulting, Inc. provided the board with an update on the Southwest Service Area Project 3. He advised the board that he would be providing updates at each meeting moving forward.

**Chairperson Gilliland addressed Agenda Item No. 28 ‘Finance Report’** Finance Director Hamilton reviewed the Finance Report for period ending April 30, 2026. **Motion by Glenn Sneider to approve the Finance Report as presented. Second by Steven Nelson. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Gilliland addressed Agenda Item No. 29 ‘Southwest Service Area Project 2 Septic to Sewer Connections Groups J through AA, Individual Map Sheets’** Executive Director Hayford discussed that as part of SWSA Septic to Sewer Project over 500 homes are to be connected to the new centralized sewer collection system. This project area was divided in the 27 manageable sized groups of homes. Bid packages are being developed for each of these groups, which include individual map sheets of each property that details points of elevation, septic tank locations, points of connection and suggested piping routes. Nine groups, that include 135 homes have had bid packages developed with 18 groups, including 371 homes that still need to be put out for bid. Executive Director Hayford discussed that Consulting Services Agreement from Sumner Engineering & Consulting to complete the remaining 371 individual map sheets necessary to develop the remaining bid packages. Sumner Engineering & Consulting was selected for this task based on their detailed knowledge of the project area and

infrastructure. There was a brief discussion. **Motion by Glenn Sneider to accept the proposal from Sumner Engineering and Consulting, Inc. to complete all remaining individual map sheets in the amount of \$104,400.00. Second by Steven Nelson. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Gilliland addressed Agenda Item No. 30 'VPS 4 Group A Bid'** Executive Director Hayford discussed that five bids were received for VPS #4 Group A. Quality Plumbing of Sarasota LLC submitted the low bid. Executive Director Hayford discussed that the bidder qualifications, licensing and reference were verified. There was a brief discussion. **Motion by Steven Nelson to approve the bid from Quality Plumbing of Sarasota LLC for VPS #4 Group A Septic to Sewer Project in the amount of \$120,066.94. Second by Harry Moldenhauer. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Gilliland addressed Agenda Item No. 31 'VPS 4 Group B Bid'** Executive Director Hayford discussed that five bids were received for VPS #4 Group B with Quality Plumbing of Sarasota LLC submitting the low bid. Executive Director Hayford discussed that the bidder qualifications, licensing and reference were verified. There was a brief discussion. **Motion by Harry Moldenhauer to approve the bid from Quality Plumbing of Sarasota LLC for VPS #4 Group B Septic to Sewer Project in the amount of \$109,701.954. Second by Steven Nelson. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Gilliland addressed Agenda Item No. 32 'Pine Ridge Park Expansion'** Executive Director Hayford discussed that the property owners at 2685 NE 6<sup>th</sup> Court contacted the OUA concerning construction work by an OUA contractor in their neighborhood. Executive Director Hayford discussed that the Moore's purchased that referenced property in April of 2026. With the purchase of the new home, a septic tank drain field was required and permitted through the Building/Health Department. Prior to the sale of the home, the title company contacted the OUA requesting whether or not any fees, liens or fines were placed on the property. The OUA responded that there were none. Executive Director Hayford discussed the Capital Connection and Installation fees that are due for the property and explained that the homeowners will still need to connect from the house to the OUA system located out in the right-of-way. Executive Director Hayford discussed that had the estoppel asked about proposed utility construction that was known and that should have been revealed to the seller, buyer & title company, a different sales contract or conditions may have been drawn up. Executive Director Hayford discussed that the OUA has a project underway, the owner needs to connect, they have a new drain field, and fees are due. Executive Director Hayford asked if the board would waive all connection fees due while the homeowner is responsible for connecting the home to the OUA system and signing up for OUA service. There was a brief discussion. **Motion by Steven Nelson to waive connections fees in the amount of \$10,500.00 for the property at 2685 NE 6<sup>th</sup> Court.**

**Harry Moldenhauer requested that we exclude the Water Meter Installation fee of \$1,399.00 from the waiver.**

**Steven Nelson revised motion to waive the \$7,113.00 sewer fees and \$1,988.00 water fees for a total of \$9,101.00, Second by Harry Moldenhauer. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Gilliland addressed Agenda Item No. 33 '185 CFM Trailer Mounted Air Compressor'** Executive Director Hayford discussed that included in the FY26 budget is the replacement of a trailer mounted air compressor for the Maintenance Barn. The current unit is a 1990 unit which was purchased used in 2012 and has required repeated repair. Executive Director Hayford reviewed the bids received. United Rental was the apparent low bidder at a cost of \$26,533.00. Chairperson Gilliland asked staff if this purchase was a capital budget item. Executive Director Hayford discussed that this item was a capital budget item for FY26. There was a brief discussion. **Motion by Steven Nelson to approve the purchase a Airman Trailer Mounted 185 CFM Compressor from United Rentals in the amount of \$26,533.00 Second by Glenn Sneider. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Gilliland addressed Agenda Item No. 34 ‘Vehicle Purchase’** Executive Director Hayford discussed that in the FY26 budget staff had listed Unit #407 a 2002 F-350 with 1414,324 miles for replacement at \$66,000.00. Staff has decided the replacement unit will be a ¾ (2500 model) instead of a 1-ton (3500 model). This decision was based on the duties & expectations of this unit. This unit will be used by a vacuum sewer crew to conduct the day-to-day operation & maintenance of the vacuum systems. Since there will be minimal trailer hauling with this unit it was determined that the 2500 model would be sufficient. Executive Director Hayford reviewed the quotes received for various dealerships. There was a brief discussion. **Motion by Steven Nelson to approve the purchase of a 2025 Chevrolet Silverado 2500 HD Regular Cab from Ferman Chevrolet in the amount of \$58,015.45. Second by Harry Moldebhauer. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Gilliland addressed Agenda Item No. 35 ‘Proposed Drop Provision’** Pension Board Chairman Mullis discussed that the OUA Pension Board Trustees at their May 4, 2026 meeting voted to recommend to the OUA Board of Directors their consideration for revisions to the Deferred Retirement Option Plan (DROP). The DROP plan now is currently 60 months (5 years), the new proposal is to extend to 96 months (8 years). It is the opinion of GRS (Pension Actuary) that there will be no actuarial impact on the cost of the Pension Fund. There was a brief discussion. **Motion by Steven Nelson to approve the Resolution adopting the proposed amendments to the Retirement System revising the DROP provisions from 5 years to 8 years at no cost to the OUA. Second by Glenn Sneider. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Gilliland addressed Agenda Item No. 36 ‘Changes to the Employee Handbook’** Executive Director Hayford discussed that

**Executive Director Hayford** Executive Director Hayford reviewed the changes to the Employee Handbook to include Section 1-7 OUA Departments, Section 5-31 reemployment of Non-Retiree and Section 5-32 Reemployment after Retirement. There was a brief discussion. **Motion by Steven Nelson to approve the changes to the Employee Handbook as presented. Second by Harry Moldenhauer. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

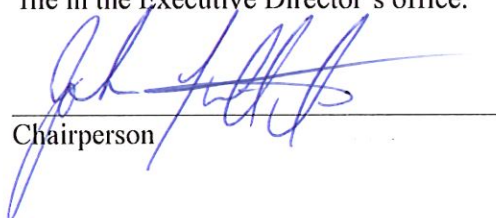
**Chairperson Gilliland addressed Agenda Item No. 37 ‘Attorney’** Attorney Conteaguero provided the board with updates on Big Cedar, Park Street Okeechobee, Kyle Upham Civil Case.

**Chairperson Gilliland addressed Agenda Item No. 38 ‘Executive Director’** Executive Director Hayford gave an update on current projects.

**Chairperson Gilliland addressed Agenda Item No. 39 ‘Items from the Board’** There were none.

**There being no other business, meeting adjourned at 9:56 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.

  
Chairperson

  
Executive Director (Secretary)