

**OKEECHOBEE UTILITY AUTHORITY****MEETING MINUTES**

Tuesday, January 20, 2026 8:00 A.M.

Okeechobee Utility Authority

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

Okeechobee, Florida

**Chairperson Nelson called the meeting to order at 8:10 A.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:**

Harry Moldenhauer\*

Steve Nelson\*

**Alternates:**

Jamie Gamiotea\*\*

Glenn Sneider \*\*\*

**Absent:**

Melanie Anderson

John Gilliland

Steve Hargraves

Tabitha Trent

\*Voting Board Members

\*\* Voting in John Gilliland's absence

\*\*\* Voting in Tabitha Trent's absence

**OUA Members:**

John Hayford

Greg Kennedy

Lauriston Hamilton

Jamie Mullis

Steve Conteaguero

Michelle Willoughby

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 2 'Agenda Additions or Deletions' There were none****Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 3 'Consent Agenda' Motion by Jamie Gamiotea to approve the Consent Agenda as presented:**

- |                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Consent Agenda Item No. 4</b> | <b>'Invoice from Holtz Consulting Engineers, Inc. – SR78 Watermain Improvements in the amount of \$15,975.00'</b>            |
| <b>Consent Agenda Item No. 5</b> | <b>'Invoice from Holtz Consulting Engineers, Inc. – Mallard landing Gravity Sewer Expansion in the amount of \$1,190.00'</b> |
| <b>Consent Agenda Item No. 6</b> | <b>'Invoice from CHA – Vac Station #2 Generator Replacement in the amount of \$586.00'</b>                                   |
| <b>Consent Agenda Item No. 7</b> | <b>'Invoice from CHA – Pine Ridge Park Expansion Project in the amount of \$8,170.00'</b>                                    |
| <b>Consent Agenda Item No. 8</b> | <b>'Invoice from Tripp Electric Motors, Inc - Emergency Pump Repair in the amount of \$17,923.34'</b>                        |

- Consent Agenda Item No. 9** 'Invoice from Xylem Water Solutions, USA, Inc. – Ozone TotalCare Preventative Maintenance in the amount of \$16,320.00'
- Consent Agenda Item No. 10** 'Invoice from Raftelis in the amount of \$370.00'
- Consent Agenda Item No. 11** 'Invoice from Nason Yeager Gerson Harris & Fumero, P.A. – Legal Services in the amount of \$5,922.06'
- Consent Agenda Item No. 12** 'Invoice from Conely and Conely, P.A. – Legal Services in the amount of \$4,975.00'
- Consent Agenda Item No. 13** 'Invoice from Thorn Run Partners in the amount of \$3,500.00'
- Consent Agenda Item No. 14** 'Invoice from MacVicar Consulting, Inc. in the amount of \$250.00'
- Consent Agenda Item No. 15** 'Operations Director Monthly Report'

Second by Glenn Sneider. Vote unanimous (5-0), motion carried.

Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 16 'Meeting Minutes from December 16, 2025' Motion by Harry Moldenhauer to approve the Meeting Minutes from December 16, 2025 as presented. Second by Glenn Sneider. Vote Unanimous (5-0), motion carried.

Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 17 'Public Comments' There were none.

#### Discussion Agenda

Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 18 'OUA Customer – Mini City Mobile Home & RV Park' Executive Director Hayford discussed that a Karen Mesa of Mini City Mobile Home & RV Park requested that the board consider a request to reduce the rate for the upcoming Treasure Island Septic to Sewer. Ms. Mesa was not present at the meeting. No action was taken by the board for this agenda item.

Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 19 'OUA Customer – David O'Cain Executive Director Hayford discussed OUA customer, David O'Cain has been charged for sewer consumption. Upon reviewing the maps and field verification it was determined that the property was not connected to the OUA sewer system. Executive Director Hayford discussed that Mr. O'Cain was notified and he expressed that he would like to connect to the OUA sewer system. Mr. O'Cain requested that the board reduce the cost of the capital connection and installation to the previously reduced rate. There was a brief discussion. Motion by Jamie Gamiotea to reduce the sewer connection fees by 75%. Second by Glenn Sneider. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.

Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 20 'Florida Job Growth Grant Fund' Executive Director Hayford discussed that Lakefront Estates development group asked the OUA to apply for a Florida Job Growth Grant Fund. The funds, if approved, will be used to construct the last phase of the SR78W Watermain Improvement Project. Executive Director Hayford discussed that a requirement for this grant is job growth. Representatives from Okeechobee Community Developers were present to discuss the grant and answer questions from the Board. Motion by Glenn Sneider to approve the Florida Job Growth Grant Agreement as discussed. Second by Harry Moldenhauer. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.

Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 21 'Large User – Water & Wastewater Analysis' Finance Director Hamilton discussed that the OUA board contracted the services of the rate consultant, Raftelis, to determine an acceptable rate structure for large users. Finance Director Hamilton discussed that subsequent discussions between staff and the rate consultant concluded that an addition of a fourth

option which applies a market adjustment of 6%, on the volumetric rate would be acceptable since precedents already exist in the industry. Murray Hamilton was present remotely to answer any questions from the Board. There was a brief discussion. **Motion by Glenn Sneider to accept Option 4 as the preferred rate structure when establishing the large user's schedule of rates, fees and charges and supersedes previous board action. Second by Jamie Gamiotea. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 22 'SW 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue Septic to Sewer Project – Update'** Executive Director Hayford discussed that the SW 5<sup>th</sup> Ave Septic to Sewer project is currently under design. Executive Director Hayford discusses that to date, the OUA has received \$5,000,000 in appropriations for an expected \$7,500,000 project. Executive Director Hayford discussed that staff asked the design engineer to look at breaking up the project up into two projects. Executive Director Hayford discussed that the project was divided up into three components: the vacuum pump station, vacuum collection system Branch A and vacuum collection system Branch B. Executive Director Hayford discussed that Sumner Engineering & Consulting, Inc. submitted for review and consideration a consulting engineering proposal to provide bidding and construction administration services. There was a brief discussion. **Motion by Harry Moldenhauer to approve dividing the project into two projects as recommended. Second by Jamie Gamiotea. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

**Motion by Jamie Gamiotea to accept the proposal from Sumner Engineering & Consulting, Inc. for bidding and construction administrative engineering services in the amount of \$292,700.00. Second by Glenn Sneider. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

*Chairperson Nelson advised that Agenda Item No. 23 would be discussed after items that required voting due to Board Member early departure.*

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda item No. 24 'SWSA Project 2 Engineering Services Agreement Amendment 3'** Executive Director Hayford discussed that SWSA Project 2 is still under contract to the contractor (HGI) with the expectation that it will be finished within the next few months. Executive Director Hayford discussed that Amendment No. 2 was to carry the engineering services through to October 31, 2025. Amendment 3 would pick up where Amendment 2 time/money ran out and carry the work effort through February 28, 2026. Executive Director Hayford discussed that the project is under the liquidated damages portion of the contract. Executive Director Hayford discussed that engineering services are necessary to successfully complete the project. Executive Director Hayford discussed that reimbursement for this additional engineering cost/time due to the contractor failure to meet the contract time would be a reasonable request. This issue will be addressed at the completion of the project. **Motion by Jamie Gamiotea to approve Amendment 3 as presented by Sumner Engineering & Consulting, Inc in the amount of \$59,560.00. Second by Harry Moldenhauer. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda item No. 25 'SR78W Phase II WM Improvement Project – Change Order No. 1'** Executive Director Hayford discussed that the contractor has experienced two construction issues in which they claim as a cause for loss of construction time. The contractor has made a claim for time only to the engineer. Executive Director Hayford discussed that the delays were due to FP&L power line locations and a section of piping cracking for unknown reasons. Executive Director Hayford discussed that the contractor and engineer have agreed to a 35-day time extension without any additional cost from either one. **Motion by Harry Moldenhauer to approve Change Order No. 1 providing for adding 35 calendar days to the contract period. Second by Glenn Sneider. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 26 'Cost Sharing Agreement SR 78W Phase III WM Improvements'** Executive Director Hayford discussed that the cost sharing agreement is for

engineering services related to the 16-inch water main proposed to be installed from the terminal point of the Phase II Project (just south of Lemkin Creek) to just south of the Big 'O RV Park. The agreement specifies a 50/50 split of the \$399,895.00 fee for design, permitting and construction services for the Phase III project. The agreement calls for a 75% initial payment (\$149,960.00) with a final 25% payment of \$49,987.00 at the conclusion of the project. There was a brief discussion. **Motion by Jamie Gamiotea to approve the execution of the SR 78W Phase III WM Improvements Project Cost Sharing Agreement between the Okeechobee Utility Authority and Okeechobee Community Developers. Second by Harry Moldenhauer. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 27 'SE-2 Wet Well Coating Rehabilitation'** Executive Director Hayford discussed that the existing SE-2 lift station was built in 2009. The coating inside the wet well has deteriorated since it was installed 17 years ago. Quotes were requested from six companies who specialize in these types of rehabilitation. Executive Director Hayford discussed that since OUA has no previous relationship with the lowest bidder, Underground Services of America, two neighboring utilities were contacted and provided as reference. **Motion by Jamie Gamiotea to accept the low bid of \$97,485.00 from Underground Services of America. Second by Harry Moldenhauer. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried. Glenn Sneider out at 8:56 AM**

Executive Director Hayford advised that Justin Nelson, Assistant County Administrator was present to address the Board. Mr. Justin Nelson discussed that Okeechobee County is planning on construction a new fire station, to be called Fire Station No. 5. Okeechobee County has received one million dollars in appropriations for the 2025/2026 budget year for the assistance for Fire Station No. 5. Fire Chief Wooten reviewed the fire and rescue call volume and "hot spots". Mr. Justin Nelson discusses that the OUA owns a property at 875 Highway 78 West which would fall right in line with the needs for the fire station. The property size, location, and water and sewer availability. Mr. Justin Nelson discussed that County is asking the OUA to donate the property to allow the county to stay within the project budget. There was a brief discussion and this item to be brought back at a future meeting for further review and consideration.

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 23 'SWSA Project 2 Update'** Executive Director Hayford discussed that Project 2 has a contractual Substantial Completion date of May 23, 2025. If the contractor had hit the substantial date, then the final completion contractual date would have been July 6, 2025. Executive Director Hayford discussed that the contractor is still trying to get to substantial completion. The OUA conducted a test of the Oak Park piping system and then the entire piping system associated with Vacuum Pump Station No. 5. In closing the piping system to six streets in Oak Park and one street in River Lakes Estates, the entire remaining piping system passed a 4-hour vacuum test. Executive Director Hayford discussed that the OUA/Engineer asked the Contractor to request a partial Substantial Completion on the piping and vacuum pump stations connected with the passing test. The seven streets would remain out of the partial request until the contractor could find and fix the vacuum leaks and get a passing test. This item was for informational purposes only.

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 28 'Lakefront Estates Master Meter Agreement'** Executive Director Hayford discussed the draft Master Meter Agreement with Lakefront Estates was reviewed by OUA Board attorney and was considered acceptable. Executive Director Hayford discussed that early this week the developer paid the fees due (\$416,838.58) for 205.4 ERCs on 45 units (both residential and commercial). Executive Director Hayford discussed that the agreement will be sent to the developer for their review. This item to be brought back at the next scheduled board meeting for further review and action.

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 29 'Executive Director'** Executive Director Hayford discussed that at the December 2025 meeting a discussion was held under "Items from the Executive Director" concerning the retirement of Director Hayford. A motion was made to find a firm that

specializes in executive job searches. After the Board meeting, an attempt was made to find such a firm. Executive Director Hayford discussed that the firm would not conduct extensive interviews nor would they only present the best candidates for the position. If the OUA hired one of their candidates, then the OUA would owe a percentage of their starting salary, typically 18-20%. There was a brief discussion. This item to be brought back at the next scheduled board meeting for further review and action.

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 30 'CAS Governmental Services, LLC Annual Contract Renewal'** Executive Director Hayford discusses that CAS Governmental Services LLC (CAS) has been the primary lobbyist for the OUA for many years. They have been instrumental in securing grants and monitoring proposed changes to statutes that impact the OUA services. Executive Director Hayford discusses the proposed agreement from CAS. Executive Director Hayford discusses the prepared annual continuing contract for four monthly installments of \$12,500.00 for an annualized total of \$50,000.00. Executive Director Hayford discusses that this contract will automatically renew unless terminated by either party or if changes to the contract are required. There was a brief discussion. Due to lack of quorum this item will be revisited at the next scheduled meeting.

**Staff Reports**

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 31A 'Finance Report'** Item tabled to next scheduled meeting.

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 31B 'Investment Report'** Item tabled to next scheduled meeting.


**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 32 'Attorney'** Attorney Conteaguero reviewed the current civil case against Pine Ridge Park customer Kyle Upham.

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 33 "Executive Director"** Executive Director Hayford gave an update on current projects.

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 34 'Items from the Board'**

**There being no other business, meeting adjourned at 9:39 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.

  
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Chairperson

  
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Executive Director (Secretary)

