

**OKEECHOBEE UTILITY AUTHORITY  
MEETING MINUTES**

Tuesday, October 29, 2024 8:00 A.M.  
Okeechobee Utility Authority  
100 SW 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Okeechobee, Florida

**Chairperson Nelson called the meeting to order at 7:58 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:**

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

**Alternates:**

Melanie Anderson  
Glenn Sneider\*\*

**Absent:**

Tabitha Trent

\*Voting Board Members

\*\* Voting in Tabitha Trent's Absence

**OUA Members:**

John Hayford  
Lauriston Hamilton

Greg Kennedy  
Michelle Willoughby

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 2 'Agenda Additions or Deletions'** Executive Director Hayford discussed that there was one addition to the agenda. Item 2A, SWSA Project 2 Change Order No. 3.

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 2A 'SWSA Project 2 Change Order No. 3'** Executive Director Hayford discussed Proposed Change Order No. 3 for the Southwest Service Area Project 2. The change order is a net deductive change order of project cost in the amount of \$26,654.50. Executive Director Hayford discussed that this item needs to be considered for approval prior to approving Consent Agenda Item #9 as it is being presented as if the change order will be approved. Executive Director Hayford discussed that this change order has been reviewed by staff, the engineer of record and USDA staff are all recommending approval of Change Order No. 3. **Motion by Harry Moldenhauer to approve Change Order No. 3 depicting a net deduction in the contract amount by \$26,654.50 without any changes to contract time. Second by Steve Hargraves. Vote unanimous (5-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 3 'Meeting Minutes from September 17, 2024.'** Board Member Moldenhauer noted that the numerical value of the voting members was incorrect on

Agenda Item #20 as Tabitha Trent abstained from voting. **Motion by John Gilliland to approve the Meeting Minutes from September 17, 2024 Meeting as amended. Second by Steve Hargraves Vote unanimous (5-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 4 ‘Update from Operations Director’** Jamie Mullis provided the board with a department update.

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 5 ‘Consent Agenda’ Motion by Harry Moldenhauer to approve the Consent Agenda as presented:**

- Consent Agenda Item No. 6 ‘Invoice from Wind River Environmental LLC in the amount \$60,229.26’**
- Consent Agenda Item No. 7 ‘Invoices from Kimley Horn and Associates, Inc. – Treasure Island Septic to Sewer Project in the amounts of \$111,128.93 and \$49,965.91’**
- Consent Agenda Item No. 8 ‘Invoice from Anderson Andre Consulting Engineers, Inc – SWSA Project 2 Vacuum Collection System in the amount of \$11,122.50’**
- Consent Agenda Item No. 9 ‘Invoice from Hinterland Group, Inc – SWSA Project 2 Vacuum Collection System in the amount of \$315,471.42’**
- Consent Agenda Item No. 10 ‘Hinterland Group, Inc. - Pine Ridge Park Utility Improvements in the amount of \$16,919.50’**
- Consent Agenda Item No. 11 ‘Invoice from Holtz Consulting Engineers, Inc. – SR 78 Watermain Improvements in the amount of \$1,175.00’**
- Consent Agenda Item No. 12 ‘Invoice from Holtz Consulting Engineers, Inc. – Kings Bay Watermain Improvements in the amount of \$3,687.00’**
- Consent Agenda Item No. 13 ‘Invoices from CHA – Vac Station #2 Generator Replacement in the amounts of \$9,050.95, \$4,589.96 and \$2,826.50’**
- Consent Agenda Item No. 14 ‘Invoice from Sumner Engineering & Consulting, Inc. – SW Wastewater Service Area Project (Part E) in the amount of \$17,189.50’**
- Consent Agenda Item No. 15 ‘Invoice from Craig A. Smith and Associates, LLC. – TCI Septic to Sewer Improvement Project in the amount of \$8,655.00’**
- Consent Agenda Item No. 16 ‘ Invoice from Thorn Run Partners in the amount of \$3,500.00’**
- Consent Agenda Item No. 17 ‘Invoice from MacVicar Consulting, Inc. in the amount of \$250.00’**

**Second by John Gilliland. Vote unanimous (5-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 18 ‘Finance Report’** Finance Director Hamilton reviewed the Finance Report for period ending September 30, 2024. **Motion by Harry Moldenhauer to approve the Finance Report for period ending September 30, 2024 as presented. Second by John Gilliland. Vote unanimous (5-0). Motion carried.**

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 19 ‘OUA Attorney’** Attorney Conley discussed that

OUA staff advertised an RFQ for legal services. The firm of Nason Yeager was the only respondent to the RFQ. Attorney Conely discussed that he reviewed the submittal and had been in contact with the respondent. Attorney Conely informed the board that Mr. John Fumero, Esq. was present to answer questions from the board. Mr. Fumero provided the board with an overview of his professional history. Mr. Fumero informed the board that he is also the attorney for the City of Okeechobee. **Motion by John Gilliland to select the firm Nason Yeager as the General Council for the Okeechobee Utility Authority. Second by Steve Hargraves. Vote as follows:**

**John Gilliland – Yes**  
**Steve Hargraves – Yes**  
**Harry Moldenhauer - No**  
**Steve Nelson - Yes**  
**Glenn Sneider – Yes**

**Super majority (4-1), motion carried.**

**Motion by Glenn Sneider to approve the Contract for Legal Services with the law firm of Nason Yeager as presented. Second by Steve Hargraves. Vote unanimous (5-0), motion carried. Glenn Sneider out at 9:25 A.M.**

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 20 ‘Purchase of New Business Processing Software’** Finance Director Hamilton discussed that currently the OUA uses Springbrook, Version 7.16 for the processing and recording of all operational transactions such as Utility Billing, General Ledger, Inventory Management and Purchase Order Control. Finance Director Hamilton discussed that due to instability of the current version of Springbrook, downtime, limited data mining capabilities, and limited support personnel equipped with Version 7.16 knowledge; the proprietor has recommended that the OUA upgrade to its cloud version. Given the inefficiency of Springbrook, some of which remains outstanding in their upgraded cloud version, staff took the opportunity to explore the availability of other business software products on the market. Finance Director Hamilton discussed that following review and evaluation of a number of software products, BS&A was consistently noted as the software of choice amongst a number of other municipalities. Finance Director Hamilton reviewed the positive attributes of the BS&A software, including a Human Resources Management Module and compatibility with Advanced Metering Infrastructure. Finance Director Hamilton discussed that the software upgrade was included in the FY25 budget. Finance Director Hamilton discussed that Attorney Conely has reviewed the contract submitted by BS&A and requested some minor changes. The contract changes were agreed to by BS&A. There was a brief discussion. **Motion by Harry Moldenhauer to approve the purchase order to BS&A in the amount of \$146,355.00. Second by John Gilliland. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 21 ‘Mallard Landing Engineering Agreement’** Executive Director Hayford discussed that the OUA publicly advertised the OUA Mallard Landing Gravity Sewer Expansion RFP on or about August 5, 2024. The OUA received one proposal from Holtz Consulting Engineers, Inc. Executive Director Hayford discussed that since only one proposal was received, the engineer was asked to prepare a scope of work and fee schedule. **Motion by John Gilliland to approve the execution of the agreement with Holtz Consulting & Engineering, Inc. Second by Steve Hargraves. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 22 “Glades County Franchise Agreement”**

Executive Director Hayford discussed that on September 23, 2024, the Glades County BOCC adopted Ordinance No. 2024-24, amending Ordinance 93-4 to extend the Franchise for an additional time period through September 30, 2026. Executive Director Hayford discussed that the time extension will allow the parties to develop a new Franchise Agreement. **Motion by Harry Moldenhauer to rescind the previous version and accept the new version as presented. Second by John Gilliland. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 23 ‘FY24 Merit Raise Summary’** Executive Director Hayford discussed that the FY24 Budget allowed for a merit increase for those qualified employees. The merit evaluations were conducted by each department supervisor. Executive Director Hayford discussed that there is a separate evaluation for each department. After the evaluations were completed, each supervisor was to meet with each of the employees to discuss the evaluation. Executive Director Hayford discussed that at the conclusion, all signed evaluations were forwarded to Human Resources for final review and tabulation of the departmental scores. Executive Director Hayford discussed that a specific employee may actually receive a merit increase different than the budgetary allocation, but the departmental total should be at the budgetary total. This item is for informational purposes only.

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 24 ‘Rates, Fees & Charges Discussion’** Executive Director Hayford discussed that each year the Schedule of Rates, Fees and Charges is brought to the board for discussion. Executive Director Hayford discussed that for last several years the rates have been reduced by 75%. At the Board meeting on August 29, 2024, the board agreed that there would not be new annual reduction and that full fees would be set for the FY25 fiscal year. Executive Director Hayford discussed that staff notified the customers in the SWSA by letter advising them of this change to the rate schedule. This change was also advertised publicly (newspaper, social media, website, etc.) for all OUA customers. Executive Director Hayford discussed the number of customers that paid required fees either in full or by signing up for a payment agreement. Executive Director Hayford discussed that a number of customers had reached out to staff regarding the fees and the payment deadline. **Chairperson Nelson called for comments from the Public.** Resident Frank DeCarlo of 405 SW 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, spoke to the board regarding the letters that were sent to customers and the fees that were outlined. Resident DeCarlo discussed the costs associated with abandoning a septic tank and connecting to public sewer that would be incurred by the property owner. Resident DeCarlo asked the Board if they had applied for grant money to assist the property owners with the associated fees. Resident Raia Black of 1521 SW 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, discussed that she had not received a letter regarding the fees and that staff should have done more to let customers know of the fee change. Board Member Hargraves discussed that he had also received calls from customer indicating that the letter did not explain the fee change and deadline very well. Executive Director Hayford discussed that staff was asked to consider the impact of providing additional time for customers to respond and if that could be done and what it would take. Executive Director Hayford discussed that a Public Hearing would need to be scheduled for November 19, 2024 to provide a Resolution that would set a reduced rate structure for a specific time period. There was a brief discussion. **Motion by John Gilliland to set a 75% reduced rate structure for the period of October 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024, where on January 1, 2025, the fee structure would return to the 100% values. Second by Steve Hargraves. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

Executive Director Hayford asked the board if staff was to contact those customers that had paid in full or entered into a payment agreement for full fees that they would have the option for reduced fees set by the November Resolution. Executive Director discussed that the customers could be given the option to receive a refund (if originally paid in full) or a new payment plan. **Motion by John Gilliland to approve for those customers who have paid in full or by payment plan the full 100% rate fees to receive a refund or a new payment plan. Second by Steve Hargraves. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 28 ‘Public Comments’** There were none

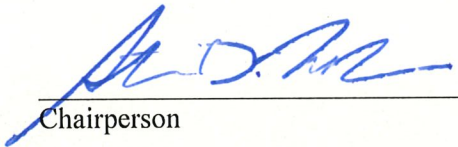
**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 29 ‘Items from the Attorney’** There were none

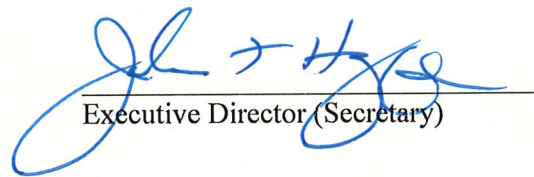
**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 29 ‘Items from the Executive Director’** Executive Director Hayford gave an update on current projects.

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 30 ‘Items from the Board’** Chairperson Nelson thanks the public for their attendance.

**There being no other business, meeting adjourned at 10:37 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)