CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA
EXECUTIVE ORDER 2026-1
LOCAL STATE OF EMERGENCY

WHEREAS, beginning on or about Saturday, October 31, 2026, and continuing through Sunday, November 1, 2026, a mid-level atmospheric disturbance moving across the Florida peninsula has produced repeated rounds of heavy rain and thunderstorms over Okeechobee County, and the National Weather Service forecast for the region identifies heavy rainfall and flooding as the principal hazards through at least Monday, November 2, 2026; and

WHEREAS, on November 1, 2026, the National Weather Service in Melbourne, Florida issued and extended a Flash Flood Warning for southeastern Okeechobee County, including the City of Okeechobee, Treasure Island, Taylor Creek, Four Seasons Estates, the Okeechobee Airport, Whispering Pines, and Basswood Estates, reporting that between 3-inches and 6-inches of rain had fallen, that additional rainfall of up to 2-inches was possible, and that life-threatening flash flooding of creeks and streams, urban areas, highways, streets, and underpasses was already occurring; and

WHEREAS, local law enforcement reported that portions of State Road 70 and U.S. Highway 441 in and around the City of Okeechobee were impassable and that floodwaters were entering structures; and

WHEREAS, a Flash Flood Watch has been issued for Okeechobee County through at least 3:00 p.m. on Monday, November 2, 2026, with forecast storm totals of 3-inches to 5-inches and localized accumulations of 5-inches to 7-inches possible, falling on ground, canals, ditches, and stormwater systems that are already saturated or at capacity; and

WHEREAS, because standing water, saturated soils, and elevated water levels in Taylor Creek, canals, ditches, and low-lying and poorly drained areas are likely to persist, and to recede slowly, for several days after rainfall ends, the threat to life, property, roadways, and public infrastructure within the City is reasonably expected to continue over the coming seven (7) days, and response, recovery, and mitigation efforts, including debris removal, damage assessment, stormwater pumping, and road and infrastructure repair, will be required during that period; and

WHEREAS, Florida Statutes Section 252.38 affirms that safeguarding the life and property of its citizens is an innate responsibility of the governing body of each political subdivision of the state and that municipalities without emergency management programs shall be served by their respective county agencies; and

WHEREAS, the City of Okeechobee, Florida, a municipality under the laws of the State of Florida, is empowered by Florida Statutes Section 252.38(5)(a) to waive the procedures and formalities otherwise required by law pertaining to the performance of public work and taking whatever prudent action is necessary to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of the community; and

WHEREAS, the City of Okeechobee Charter Section C-2.2.B., authorizes the Mayor to declare an emergency situation, and other related emergency declarations; and

WHEREAS, as Mayor of the City of Okeechobee, Florida, I hereby find that the ongoing and forecasted heavy rainfall and flooding described above pose an imminent threat of substantial injury and harm to the residents of the City and a threat of substantial damage to property and public infrastructure, and constitute an emergency as defined in Section 252.34(4), Florida Statutes;

NOW, THEREFORE, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Mayor of the City of Okeechobee, Florida, by City Charter Section C-2.2.B., and the Laws of the State of Florida, I hereby issue this Executive Order:

SECTION 1. **State of Local Emergency**. Based on the findings and justifications set forth in the recitals above, which are incorporated herein by reference, I hereby declare a Local State of Emergency for the City of Okeechobee, Florida (the "City").

SECTION 2. **Mayor's Continuity of Government Powers**. Pursuant to Chapter 252, Florida Statutes, and City Charter Section C-2.2.B., the Mayor is hereby empowered and authorized to perform or exercise the actions set forth herein as the need or circumstances arise; additionally, the procedures and formalities otherwise required of the City by law or ordinance are hereby waived pertaining to the actions set forth herein.

SECTION 3. **Adoption of County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan**. Pursuant to the Mayor's authority pursuant to City Charter Section C-2.2.B., the City shall be subject to and in all respects shall cooperate with the Okeechobee County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan.

SECTION 4. **City Administrator Designated as Emergency Manager**. I hereby designate the City Administrator as the City Emergency Manager and direct the City Emergency Manager to coordinate City emergency response activities with those of the Okeechobee County Emergency Management Office.

SECTION 4. **Effective Date and Duration**. This Executive Order shall take effect immediately on the date set forth below and shall remain in effect for seven (7) days, unless terminated earlier. This Executive Order may be extended, as necessary, in seven (7) day increments.

SECTION 5. **Enforcement**. Pursuant to Section 252.46, Florida Statutes, this Executive Order shall be filed with the City Clerk's office within three (3) days after its issuance and shall be posted on the City's Public Notice website.

DONE and ORDERED this, 1st day of November, 2026.

Dowling R. Watford, Jr., Mayor

REVIEWED FOR ELGAL SUFFICIENCY:
John J. Fumero
John J. Fumero, City Attorney
Nason Yeager Gerson Harris & Fumero, P.A.

Date Filed with the City Clerk: November 1, 2026.