



CITY OF OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA
JUNE 16, 2026, REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING
OFFICIAL MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Watford called the regular meeting of the City Council for the City of Okeechobee to order on June 16, 2026, at 6:00 P.M. in the City Council Chambers, located at 55 Southeast (SE) 3rd Avenue (AVE), Room 200, Okeechobee, Florida (FL). The invocation was offered by Mayor Watford; followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Council Member Chandler.

II. ATTENDANCE

City Clerk Lane Gamiotea called the roll. Members physically present to establish a quorum: Mayor Dowling R. Watford, Jr., Vice Mayor Monica M. Clark, Council Members Noel A. Chandler, Robert "Bob" Jarriel, and David R. McAuley.

III. AGENDA AND PUBLIC COMMENTS

- A. There were no modifications made to the published agenda, although Exhibit 8 was added and noted with its item.
- B. Motion by Council Member Chandler, seconded by Council Member Jarriel to adopt the agenda as published. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**
- C. No comment cards were received for public participation for issues not on the agenda.

IV. PROCLAMATIONS

- A. Mayor Watford called for a November 3, 2026, General City Election to be held by reading the following Proclamation into the record as follows, as presented in **Exhibit 1**: "Whereas, under and by virtue of the provisions of the City of Okeechobee Charter, Code of Ordinances Chapter 26 titled Elections, and FL State Laws, it is the duty of the Mayor to Proclaim and Call a General City Election at least 30-days before the first day qualifying begins. The Proclamation shall specify the Office(s) to be filled; the cause of the vacancy of such Office(s); qualifying period dates, time(s), and location; dates, times, and methods of casting votes by the electors; and the date of the expiration of the terms of such Office(s); and Whereas, the City Clerk shall publish the Proclamation in the local newspaper at least twice, during the 30-days before the first day qualifying begins in which the General City Election will be held; and Whereas, qualifications to run for Office(s) in the General City Election: Candidates must be a City registered voter; must have resided continuously within the City Limits for at least one (1) year preceding the date of filing to run for Office(s); pay the required fees and file all required documents with the City Clerk during City Qualifying Week, beginning at noon, August 3, 2026, through but not later than noon, August 7, 2026. Now, Therefore, I, Dowling R. Watford, Jr., as Mayor of the City of Okeechobee, FL do hereby Proclaim and Declare that a General City Election be held on November 3, 2026, by the qualified electors of the City who have registered to vote by October 5, 2026, for the purpose of electing three (3) City Council Members whose terms expire on January 4, 2027. The three (3) Candidates with the highest votes will serve as City Council Members for four (4) years, beginning January 4, 2027, and ending January 6, 2031, following such Election and until their successors are elected and qualified. Voting shall be held from 7:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M., on Election Day, November 3, 2026, at the City Voting Precinct; during Early Voting to be held from 8:30 A.M. to 6:00 P.M., daily from October 24, through 31, 2026, at the Okeechobee County Supervisor of Elections Office; or Vote-by-Mail as provided by State Law."

V. CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by Council Member McAuley, seconded by Vice Mayor Clark to:

- A. Dispense with the reading and approve the following Minutes for:
 - 1. May 11, 2026, Special Meeting [as presented in **Exhibit 2**];
 - 2. May 19, 2026, Regular Meeting [as presented in **Exhibit 3**];
 - 3. June 2, 2026, Regular Meeting [as presented in **Exhibit 4**]; and
- B. Approve the May 2026 Warrant Register [in the amounts of General Fund, \$702,127.73; Appropriations Grant Fund, \$489,133.45; Other Grant Capital Fund, \$209,829.28; Capital Improvement Projects Fund, \$29,334.00; and Public Facilities Improvement Fund, \$22,969.05; as presented in **Exhibit 5**].

Motion Carried Unanimously.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Motion by Council Member Jarriel, seconded by Vice Mayor Clark to approve the Lighting Emitting Diode (or LED) Lighting Agreement with Florida Power and Light to install five 30-foot light fixtures on [new roadways] Northeast (NE) 13th AVE and NE 3rd Street (ST) [in Park ST Commerce Center, as presented in **Exhibit 6**]. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

VI. NEW BUSINESS CONTINUED

- A. Continued. City Administrator Ritter noted there will be a Change Order issued to B&B Site Development, Inc., for their construction and paving Contract within Park ST Commerce Center for the electrical conduit beneath the road. The Florida Department of Commerce Grant Agreement No. D0339 funds will cover the cost. Additionally, he reminded/clarified the current contract is for Phase I. The remainder of the roadways are in Phase 2. Project information has been sent to RMPK Funding to apply for new Grant funds.
- B. Motion by Council Member Jarriel, seconded by Council Member McAuley to [award a paving project, No. 4, for Fiscal Year 2025-26 as provided in the Piggyback Agreement from Okeechobee County Request for Proposal No. 2024-01] to C.W. Roberts Contracting, Inc., to resurface Northwest (NW) 5th AVE, from NW 9th to 11th ST; NW 3rd AVE, from NW 9th to 13th ST; SE 13th AVE, from NE Park/State Road 70 East to SE 8th ST; SE 7th ST, from SE 9th to 13th AVE; SE 15th ST, from SE 8th Drive to 9th AVE; and SE 6th AVE, from SE 4th to 7th ST, in an amount not to exceed \$486,450.25 [as presented in **Exhibit 7**]. **Motion Carried Unanimously.**

VII. CITY ATTORNEY UPDATE

A copy of the written update was added to the official Minute File, labeled as **Exhibit 8**.

- Advised the Landscape Maintenance and Installation Services Request for Proposal has been reviewed and is ready for the City Clerk's Office to advertise.
- Attended the June 9, 2026, Code Enforcement Special Magistrate Hearing remotely.

VIII. CITY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE

- Thanked incoming City Administrator Whitehead for her diligent work by meeting individually with the City Council and staff to help ensure a smooth transition in July.
- Gave a status update on the City Hall Hardening Project; the windows and exterior doors are currently being installed. The stucco and painting will be touched up, and exposed conduits will be covered. All should be completed by mid-July.
- The Public Safety Building Design Build Contract continues to progress and will eventually be brought to the City Council for approval.

IX. COUNCIL COMMENTS

- Council Member Chandler commented he is good and helping at his church's Vacation Bible School this week.
- Council Member Jarriel stated he was sad that tonight could be Administrator Ritter's last City Council meeting and expressed his gratitude for all the hard work he has put in over the last five years.
- Council Member McAuley thanked the Public Works staff for cleaning the drainage ditch and rebuilding its bank in his neighborhood following a recent downpour of rain.
- Vice Mayor Clark thanked Administrator Ritter for his work over the last five years.

Mayor Watford:

- Reminded all of the Revolutionary War speaker at the Okeechobee County Library, 2:00 P.M., on June 30, 2026; and the Independence Day event at the Okeechobee County Agri-Civic Center, gates open at 12:00 P.M., on July 4, 2026.
- Thanked Administrator Ritter for his work as the City Administrator, as a City Council Member, and for his community involvement.

X. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further items, Mayor Watford adjourned the meeting at 6:23 P.M.

Submitted By:



Lane Gamiotea, CMC, City Clerk

Please take notice and be advised that when a person decides to appeal any decision made by the City Council with respect to any matter considered at this meeting, s/he may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceeding is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. City Clerk media are for the sole purpose of backup for official records of the Clerk.