

**OKEECHOBEE UTILITY AUTHORITY
MEETING MINUTES**

Tuesday, July 15, 2025 8:00 A.M.

Okeechobee Utility Authority

100 SW 5th Avenue

Okeechobee, Florida

Chairperson Nelson called the meeting to order at 8:00 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*
Harry Moldenhauer*
Steve Nelson*
Tabitha Trent*

Alternates:

Melanie Anderson
Jamie Gamiotea
Glenn Sneider**

Absent:

Steve Hargraves

*Voting Board Members

**Voting in Steve Hargraves 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 was none.

Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 3 ‘Consent Agenda’ Motion by Tabitha Trent to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

Consent Agenda Item No. 4 ‘Invoice from Sumner Engineering & Consulting, Inc. – SW Wastewater Service Area Project (Part E) in the amount of \$16,399.25’

Consent Agenda Item No. 5 ‘Invoice from Sumner Engineering & Consulting, Inc. – SW Wastewater Service Area – Vacuum Station Force Main Services in the amount of \$1,260.00’

Consent Agenda Item No. 6 ‘Invoice from Kimley-Horn and Associates and Associates, Inc. – Treasure Island Septic to Sewer Project in the amount of \$23,081.35’

Consent Agenda Item No. 7 ‘Invoice from Andersen Andre Consulting Engineers, Inc. – SWSA Project 2 vacuum Collection System in the amount of \$7,147.50’

- Consent Agenda Item No. 8** ‘Invoice from Holtz Consulting Engineers, Inc. – SR 78 Watermain Improvements in the amount of \$1,680.00’
- Consent Agenda Item No. 9** ‘Invoice from Raftelis in the amount of \$5,297.50’
- Consent Agenda Item No. 10** ‘Invoice from Nason Yeager Gerson Harris & Fumero, P.A. – Legal Services in the amount of \$4,851.60’
- Consent Agenda Item No. 11** ‘Invoice from Conely and Conely, P.A. – Legal Services in the amount of \$4,862.50’
- Consent Agenda Item No. 12** ‘Invoice from Lewis, Longman, & Walker, P.A. – Legal Services in the amount of \$1,900.00’
- 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 Harry Moldenhauer. Vote unanimous (5-0), motion carried.

Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 16 ‘Safety Award Presentation’ Operations Director Mullis discussed that representatives, Pam Hancock and Lauren Quinto, from Public Risk Underwriters were at the meeting to present the Authority with the 2025 Preferred Safety & Risk Management Member Award.

Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 17 ‘Meeting Minutes from June 17, 2025’ Motion by Tabitha Trent to approve the Meeting Minutes from June 17, 2025 as presented. Second by Harry Moldenhauer. Vote Unanimous (5-0), motion carried.

Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 18 ‘Employee Recognition’ Chairperson Nelson recognized John Hayford for his 25 years of service to the OUA.

Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 19 ‘Public Comments’ There were none.

Discussion Agenda

Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 20 ‘Customer Request – Kelly’ Executive Director Hayford discussed that Mrs. Kelly of 906 NE 29th Terrace was present to speak to the board regarding the Pine Ridge Park water and sewer connection fees that are due for the property. Executive Director Hayford discussed that staff had sent several letters to both the property address and the son’s address regarding the fees that were due on the property. Mrs. Kelly stated to the board that she did not receive the letters and due to the declining health of her husband’s mother the property had been vacant for some time. Mrs. Kelly explained to the board that the home is in a major state of disrepair. Mrs. Kelly asked the board to consider reducing the fees due on the property so that the family could satisfy the debt owed as the property was for sale. Board Member Gamiotea inquired about how many property owners had not paid and connected to the system. Executive Hayford discussed that there are 10 properties that have not paid or connected. Executive Hayford discussed that those properties addresses had been turned over to Code Enforcement. There was a brief discussion. **Motion by Tabitha Trent to approve the 50% reduction of current fees due (\$4756.50) for the property located at 906 NE 29th Terrace. Second by John Gilliland. Vote unanimous (5-0), motion carried.**

Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 21 ‘Corrections to OUA Board Meeting June 2025’ Executive Director Hayford discussed that at the June 17, 2025 Board Meeting, there was one City member, two County members and one Glades County member as voting members to make the quorum necessary for the Board to take action. After review of the meeting minutes, it was determined that an Alternate member, while they may participate in the discussions, they may not make or second motions and vote if the two regular members are present. Executive Director Hayford discussed due to a non-voting member being involved in the procedural process of making or seconding motions, it is of the OUA Attorney’s legal opinion that all previous actions for Agenda Items 3, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28 and 33A should be rescinded. Attorney Conteaguero discussed that it would be acceptable if the Board chose to ratify the actions taken at the meeting. There was a brief discussion. **Motion by Tabitha Trent to ratify action taken at the June 17, 2025 Board meeting on Agenda Items 3, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28 and 33A. Second by John Gilliland. Vote unanimous (5-0), motion carried.**

Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 22 ‘NW-15 Pump Station Upgrade Engineering RFP’ Executive Director Hayford that after the June 2025 OUA Board meeting, staff determined that the engineering services request had to be bid out as a separate RFP and not an extension of a previous engineering services agreement. Staff received one submittal along with two engineering groups stating they were not going to respond. Executive Director Hayford discussed that the respondent was Sumner Engineering & Consulting, Inc. and the submission was evaluated by three OUA staff members and no exceptions were noted, the submittal essentially complied with the RFP. Executive Director Hayford discussed that the work effort for this project will require two engineering services agreements. Executive Director Hayford further discussed that funding for this project will be provided by the OUA with another portion funded by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS). The FDACS portion will be based upon energy efficiency and will fund some engineering and the purchase of energy efficient pumps, motors, controls and mechanical components. All other parts, material and work will be funded by the OUA. **Motion by Tabitha Trent to approve the RFP submitted from Sumner Engineering & Consulting, Inc, as the engineer for the NW 15 Pump Station Upgrade project. Second by John Gilliland. Vote unanimous (5-0), motion carried.**

Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 23 ‘NW-15 Pump Station Rehabilitation - FDACS’ Executive Director Hayford discussed that the OUA had received an energy efficiency grant from the Florida Department of Agricultural Consumer Services (FDACS) in the amount of \$647,000. This grant will be disbursed to offset costs associated with contractual engineering services, purchase of mechanical equipment and purchase of electrical/control equipment. Executive Director Hayford discussed that NW-15 was originally constructed approximately 24 years ago with various minor improvements along the way. Recently the sanitary force main from the Southwest Service Area was installed and connected to the station. Executive Director Hayford discussed that with wastewater flows from the SWSA including Okee-Tantie to increase the overall flow at the station over the next several years., the OUA has begun this upgrade to bigger more efficient pumps and backup electrical supply. There was a brief discussion. **Motion by Tabitha Trent to authorize the Board Chairman and staff to execute the Consulting Services Agreement 25-11 (\$60,000) prepared by Sumner Engineering & Consulting, Inc. and to execute and all FDACS paperwork associated with the energy efficient grant application process. Second by John Gilliland. Vote unanimous (5-0), motion carried.**

Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 24 ‘NW-15 Pump Station Rehabilitation Engineering Services Agreement’ Executive Director Hayford discussed that this project will include

new pump/motors, discharge piping including a new on grade valve pad, new electrical control panel, generator, odor control and other miscellaneous components. The preliminary engineers estimate of the work is at \$2,750,000. Executive Director Hayford discussed that with the grant money coming in at \$647,000, the OUA portion is at \$2,103,000. The OUA will use monies set aside from the LPQ0008 grant to pay for this project. **Motion by Tabitha Trent to approve the Board Chairman and staff to execute the Consulting Services Agreement 25-10 (\$189,600) prepared by Sumner Engineering & Consulting, Inc. to complete all of the engineering work required for the NW-15 Pump Station Rehabilitation. Second by Harry Moldenhauer. Vote unanimous (5-0), motion carried.**

Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 25 'State Road 78 West Phase II Water Main Improvement Project' Executive Director Hayford discussed that the proposed project extends the 16-inch water main approximately 4,000 feet westward along State Road 78. Executive Director Hayford discussed that once the 16-inch water main is in place the current 6-inch main will be removed. The 16-inch will tie in across State Road 78 and at that time the current 8-inch main will be removed. Executive Director Hayford discussed that a 50/50 cost sharing agreement between the OUA and a developer was in place for Phase I of this project. The developer had expressed interest in a 50/50 cost share for Phase II. Executive Director Hayford discussed that a representative from Lakefront Estates was present to answer any questions. The representative discussed that there are approximately 200-300 homes to be completed by July 2026 as well as several commercial buildings. It was further discussed that there will be another 1300 homes and commercial buildings to be completed by 2028. There was a brief discussion. **Motion by Tabitha Trent to approve the Cost Share Agreement as presented and authorize the Board Chairman to execute the agreement. Second by Harry Moldenhauer. Vote unanimous (5-0), motion carried.**

Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 26 '2026 FDEP Water Quality Grants' Executive Director Hayford discussed that it is the time of year when the Florida Department of Environmental Protection requesting consideration of grant funding. Executive Director Hayford discussed that there are no funds this year for wastewater projects. *Glenn Sneider and John Gilliland out at 8:56 A.M.* Executive Director Hayford discussed that staff have put together a short list of projects that are up for consideration. Executive Director Hayford discussed that the first project up for consideration is the Cemetery Road WWTF AWT Upgrade. The State legislation has directed new effluent limits for wastewater treatment plants that utilize reclaimed water for disposal. The WWTF will require upgrades to include treatment units, new nutrient removal units, filtration, disinfection and possibly storage tanks. *John Gilliland in at 8:57 A.M.* Current preliminary estimated costs for the Cemetery Road WWTF could be as high as \$20,000,000. Executive Director Hayford discussed that the 2025 Lake Okeechobee BMAP identifies July 1, 2034, as to when the lower effluent limits will go into effect.

Executive Director Hayford discussed that next project up for consideration is the SWSA Septic to Sewer Connections. Executive Director Hayford discussed that SWSA Project 2 is nearing completion. Once complete there will be approximately 550 homes to connect. Once Project 3 is completed it will allow for upwards of 80 multi-family connections.

Executive Director Hayford discussed that the final project up for consideration is AMI. A Request for Inclusion has been submitted to the State Revolving Fund (SRF) for \$4,280,337

which represents the install cost for this advanced metering information project. Executive Director Hayford discussed that this cost is inclusive of all aspects of the project from design, bidding, construction to project close out. It includes the installation of up to 9,330-meter connections. Executive Director Hayford discussed that to supplement the SRF request, staff will submit a grant application to partially fund this project. No Board action was taken on this item. *Melanie Anderson out at 9:01 A.M.*

Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 27 ‘FY26 Preliminary Budget Overview’ Finance Director Hamilton provided an overview of the FY26 Preliminary Budget. Finance Director Hamilton discussed that a Murray Hamilton from Raftelis Financial Consultants will be present at the next board meeting to discuss the Financial Forecast and Large User Rate Studies. There was a brief discussion during which time Board Members requested that workshop be scheduled to discuss the budget in further detail. A Workshop will be scheduled for August 5, 2025 at 4:00 P.M.

Staff Reports

Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 28A ‘Finance Report’ Finance Director Hamilton reviewed the Finance Report for period ending June 30, 2025. **Motion by John Gilliland to approve the Finance Report as presented. Second by Harry Moldenhauer. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

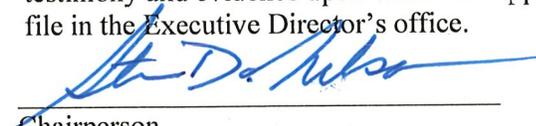
Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 34 ‘Attorney’ Attorney Conteaguero discussed that Attorney Conely will continue to assist the OUA with local real estate transactions due to his extensive knowledge of the Okeechobee area.

Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 35 ‘Executive Director’ Executive Director Hayford gave an update on current projects. Executive Director Hayford discussed that he will be on vacation from July 17 - August 3, 2025. Executive Director Hayford requested that the board authorize Assistant Executive Director Greg Kennedy to sign any necessary paperwork in his absence. **Motion by Tabitha Trent to authorize Assistant Executive Director Kennedy to sign and execute any necessary paperwork in the absence of the Executive Director. Second by John Gilliland. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 36 ‘Items from the Board’ There were none.

There being no other business, meeting adjourned at 9:58 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.



Chairperson



Executive Director (Secretary)