

**OKEECHOBEE UTILITY AUTHORITY  
MEETING MINUTES**

Tuesday, February 18, 2025 8:00 A.M.

Okeechobee Utility Authority  
100 SW 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Okeechobee, Florida

**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chairperson Trent called the meeting to order at 8:00 A.M.**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chairperson Trent determined the voting members and led all participating attendees and visitors in the Pledge of Allegiance.**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chairperson Trent addressed Agenda Item No. 1, the following Okeechobee Utility Authority Board Members were present:**

**Board Members:**

Steve Hargraves\*  
Harry Moldenhauer\*  
Tabitha Trent\*

**Alternates:**

Melanie Anderson  
Glenn Sneider

**Absent:**

John Gilliland  
Steve Nelson

\*Voting Board Members

*Due to a lack of quorum there will be no votes taken at this meeting.*

**OUA Members:**

John Hayford  
Greg Kennedy

Lauriston Hamilton  
Jamie Mullis

Steve Conteaguero  
Michelle Willoughby

**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chairperson Trent addressed Agenda Item No. 2 ‘Agenda Additions or Deletions’ There were none.**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chairperson Trent addressed Agenda Item No. 3 ‘**

**Consent Agenda Item No. 4 ‘Invoice from Sumner Engineering & Consulting, Inc. – SW Wastewater Service Area Project (Part E) in the amount of \$24,426.00’**

**Consent Agenda Item No. 5 ‘Invoice from Sumner Engineering & Consulting, Inc. – Consumptive use Permit Consulting in the amount of \$585.00’**

**Consent Agenda Item No. 6 ‘Invoice from Sumner Engineering & Consulting, Inc. – SW Wastewater Service Area Project – Vacuum Station 4 Force Main Services in the amount of \$1,995.00’**

**Consent Agenda Item No. 7 ‘Invoice from Holtz Consulting Engineers, Inc. – Mallard Landing Gravity Sewer Expansion in the amount of \$16,465.00’**

**Consent Agenda Item No. 8 ‘Invoice from Holtz Consulting Engineers, Inc. – SRF for Implementation of AMI in the amount of \$2,236.00’**

- Consent Agenda Item No. 9** 'Invoice from Hinterland Group, Inc. – SWSA Project 2 Vacuum Collection System in the amount of \$640,891.56'
- Consent Agenda Item No. 10** 'Invoices from Conely and Conely, P.A. – Legal Services in the amount of \$3,175.00'
- Consent Agenda Item No. 11** 'Invoice from Thorn Run Partners in the amount of \$3,500.00'
- Consent Agenda Item No. 12** 'Invoice from MacVicar Consulting, Inc. in the amount of \$250.00'

No action taken during this meeting due to a lack of quorum.

*An email delivered to OUA Board Members was sent out (2/19/2025) requesting their approval or disapproval of the Consent Agenda as presented. OUA Board Members were instructed to choose the "Reply" tab to send their votes. Four voting members responded with approval. This agenda item will be brought back at the March 2025 meeting for discussion and formal action.*

**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chairperson Trent** addressed Agenda Item No. 13 'Meeting Minutes from February 4, 2025.' No action taken during this meeting due to a lack of quorum.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chairperson Trent** addressed Agenda Item No. 14 'Employee Recognition' There were no employees to recognize at this time.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chairperson Trent** addressed Agenda Item No. 15 'Public Comments' There were none

### **Discussion Agenda**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chairperson Trent** addressed Agenda Item No. 16 '6<sup>th</sup> Draw-Down on Interim Finance – SW Service Area 2' Finance Director Hamilton discussed the Interim Finance Agreement with SouthState Bank. The USDA will reimburse SouthState Bank (SSB) and transfer a portion of the funds utilized to a forty-year loan. Finance Director Hamilton discussed that staff is requesting Board approval to submit draw-down #6 in the amount of \$1,640,117.58 to cover pay applications from Hinterland Group, Inc., Sumner Engineering & Consulting, Inc. and SSB interest. No action taken during this meeting due to a lack of quorum.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chairperson Trent** addressed Agenda Item No. 17 'Pine Ridge Park Septic to Sewer Project Closeout' Executive Director Hayford discussed that a Notice to Proceed was issued for the Pine Ridge Park Septic to Sewer Project on June 21, 2022. Executive Director Hayford discussed that as allowed by the initial contract and change orders there was 606 calendar days allocated to reach substantial completion. Executive Director Hayford discussed that 30 calendar days after substantial completion the project should reach Final Completion. Executive Director Hayford that throughout the project, several change orders had been approved reflecting changes to the contract price or time. Executive Director Hayford reviewed the Change Orders. Executive Director Hayford discussed that on June 24, 2024, the contractor reached Substantial Completion and the OUA took over beneficial use of the new system. Executive Director Hayford discussed the Okeechobee Board of County Commissioners is requesting assistance from the OUA with regards to the asphalt roadway conditions in the Pine Ridge Park area after all the ongoing work by both the OUA and County is complete. Executive Director Hayford reviewed the Final change Orders and Final Pay Application. Chase Rogers from Hinterland

Group was present to discuss the obstacles that the project endured. There was a brief discussion. No action taken during this meeting due to a lack of quorum.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chairperson Trent addressed Agenda Item No. 18 ‘SW 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue Septic to Sewer Facilities Plan’** Executive Director Hayford discussed that the OUA has several requests submitted for funding assistance to construct the SW 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue Septic to Sewer Conversion project. Executive Director Hayford discussed that the cost projection for the project is seven million dollars. Executive Director Hayford discussed that if the OUA does not get loan or grant funding then a request will have to be submitted to State Revolving Fund (SRF). The SRF request must be submitted by July 2025. Executive Director Hayford discussed that staff requested that the design team prepare a facility plan and an application to seek funding from the SRF as a backup to the appropriation request. No action taken during this meeting due to a lack of quorum.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chairperson Trent addressed Agenda Item No. 19 ‘Pending OUA Grant Activity’** Executive Director Hayford discussed the current funding requests submitted for the 2025 Legislative priorities, FDACS, FDEP Water Quality, and TMDL grants and federal funding opportunities. This item is for informational purposes only.

### **Staff Reports**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chairperson Trent addressed Staff Reports Agenda Item No. 20 ‘Operations Director’** Operations Director Mullis discussed that staff are currently conducting general maintenance items at the Surface Water and Wastewater Treatment plants. Operation Director Mullis discussed that the maintenance staff completed confined space training on February 13, 2025. Executive Director Hayford discussed that staff is working to bring the Groundwater Treatment Plant (GWTP) into working order. The GWTP has some repairs that are necessary to bring the plant to complete working order as it has been idle for many years. Executive Director Hayford discussed that staff will replacing a old watermain on 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue due to its age.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chairperson Trent addressed Agenda Item No. 21 ‘Finance Report’** Finance Director Hamilton reviewed the Finance Report for period ending January 31, 2025. No action taken during this meeting due to a lack of quorum.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chairperson Trent addressed Agenda Item No. 22 ‘Attorney’** Attorney Conteaguero updated the board on a slip and fall lawsuit filed against the OUA in November 2023.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chairperson Trent addressed Agenda Item No. 23 ‘Executive Director’** Executive Director Hayford gave an update on current projects. Executive Director Hayford discussed that staff are in the process of hiring an Assistance Finance Director and Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chairperson Trent addressed Agenda Item No. 15 ‘Items from the Board’** Okeechobee County Commissioner Hazellief discussed that the county has contracted with a company to overlay specific roads in Pine Ridge Park. The contractor will pull the permits place the asphalt. County Commissioner Hazellief asked that the OUA split the costs on a 50/50 basis.

**There being no other business, meeting adjourned at 8:45 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)