

**OKEECHOBEE UTILITY AUTHORITY  
MEETING MINUTES**

Tuesday, January 21, 2025 8:00 A.M.

Okeechobee Utility Authority  
100 SW 5<sup>th</sup> 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:**

Steve Hargraves\*  
Steve Nelson\*  
Tabitha Trent\*

**Alternates:**

Melanie Anderson\*\*

**Absent:**

John Gilliland  
Harry Moldenhauer  
Glenn Sneider

\*Voting Board Members

\*\*Voting in Harry Moldenhauer's absence

**OUA Members:**

John Hayford  
Greg Kennedy  
Tom Conely

Lauriston Hamilton  
Jamie Mullis

Steve Conteaguero  
Michelle Willoughby

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 2 'Agenda Additions or Deletions' There were none.**

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 3 'Consent Agenda' Motion by Melanie Anderson 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 \$18,974.22'**
- Consent Agenda Item No. 5 'Invoice from Sumner Engineering & Consulting, Inc. – SW Wastewater Service Area Project (Part F) in the amount of \$45,685.50'**
- Consent Agenda Item No. 6 'Invoice from Sumner Engineering & Consulting, Inc. – Okee-Tantie Utility System Improvements in the amount of 41,001.43'**
- Consent Agenda Item No. 7 'Invoice from Hinterland Group, Inc. – Pine Ridge Park Utility Improvements in the amount of \$85,864.15'**
- Consent Agenda Item No. 8 'Invoice from Holtz Consulting Engineers, Inc. – SR 78 Watermain Improvements in the amount of \$3,835.00'**
- Consent Agenda Item No. 9 'Invoice from Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. – Treasure**

- Island Septic to Sewer Project in the amount of \$24,402.26'
- Consent Agenda Item No. 10 'Invoice from Andersen Andre Consulting Engineers, Inc. – SWSA Project 2 Vacuum Collection System in the amount of \$12,065.00'
- Consent Agenda Item No. 11 'Invoices from CHA – Vac Station #2 Generator Replacement in the amounts of \$1,812.00 and \$1,359.00'
- Consent Agenda Item No. 12 'Invoice from Crag. A. Smith and Associates, LLC – TCI Septic to Sewer Improvement Project in the amount of \$1,575.00'
- Consent Agenda Item No. 13 'Invoice from Holtz Consulting Engineers, Inc – Lead and Copper Engineering Assistance in the amount of \$11,200.00'
- Consent Agenda Item No. 14 'Invoices from PRP Construction, LLC – SR78W Water Main Improvements – Phase 1 in the amounts of \$174,577.00 and \$104,026.00
- Consent Agenda Item No. 15 'Invoices from Lewis, Longman & Walker, P.A. – USDA Loan Legal Services in the amount of \$3,515.00'
- Consent Agenda Item No. 16 'Invoice from Conely and Conely, PA. – Legal Services in the amounts of \$2,893.75'
- Consent Agenda Item No. 17 'Invoice from Thorn Run Partners in the amount of \$3,500.00'
- Consent Agenda Item No. 18 'Invoice from MacVicar Consulting, Inc. in the amount of \$250.00'
- Consent Agenda Item No. 19 'Surplus Property'
- Consent Agenda Item No. 20 'Corrected 2025 OUA Holidays'
- Second by Steve Hargraves. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.

Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 21 'Meeting Minutes from December 17, 2024.' Motion by Melanie Anderson to approve the Meeting Minutes from December 17, 2024 Meeting as presented. Second by Steve Hargraves. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.

Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 22 'Employee Recognition' Chairperson Nelson recognized Kevin Rogers for 30 years of service and Roy Hawkins, Jr. for 5 years of service to the OUA. These employees were not present at the meeting.

Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 23 'Public Comments' There were none

### Discussion Agenda

Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 24 'Taylor Creek Isles Septic to Sewer Project' Executive Director Hayford discussed that the Taylor Creek Isles Septic to Sewer Project connected the remaining 15 homes to the Vacuum Pump Station No. 2 collection system has been completed. Executive Director Hayford discussed that there was an adjustment made to the contingency line item by way of Allowance Authorization No. 2 to compensate for adjustments to quantities installed relative to bid quantities. Executive Director Hayford discussed that the original bid price was \$177,503.26 and the final invoicing is at \$159,166.26. Motion by Tabitha Trent to approve deductive Change Order No. 1 in the amount of \$18,337.00. Second by Melanie Anderson. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.

**Motion by Tabitha Trent to approve the final pay application in the amount of \$64,055.00 to Wind River Environmental, LLC. Second by Melanie Anderson Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 25 'NE Glades Wastewater Master Plan'** Executive Director Hayford discussed that the Master Plan will be used as the basis for future design and permitting of wastewater capital improvement projects in the study area. The plan will be used as the basis for future State/FDEP funding requests. Executive Director Hayford discussed that the RFQ was issued on November 20, 2024 and responses were due on January 9, 2025. Executive Director Hayford discussed that staff had received four responses; Craig A. Smith & Associates, CHA Solutions, Inc. Holtz Consulting Engineers and SLD Newlines. Executive Director Hayford discussed that staff met to discuss their individual findings and turn in their grading sheets. The committee could not agree on a number one ranked firm. Executive Director Hayford discussed that if based upon score only, CHA Solutions, Inc. had the highest cumulative score. Executive Director Hayford discussed that the board could ask for presentations from the firms that submitted responses or review the company submittals and develop a final ranking. There was a brief discussion and the OUA Board directed staff to negotiate a scope of work and fee schedule and return for board review. **Motion by Tabitha Trent to approve the ranking as 1. CHA Solutions, Inc., 2. Holtz Consulting Engineers, and 3. Craig A. Smith & Associates. Second by Melanie Anderson. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 26 'Transfer from Operating to CIP Fund'** Finance Director Hamilton discussed that following the preparation of the 2024 Investment report, a proactive review of the operating fund balances was undertaken. Finance Director Hamilton discussed that after considering the anticipated operating funding needs and the current balances, staff calculated the excess funding in the operating account to be \$1,067,176.00. Finance Director Hamilton discussed the options available for the excess funding. Finance Director Hamilton discussed transferring \$881,579 to the CIP funding account and leaving the remaining funds in the operating account. The transfer of funds would bring the total available in the CIP fund to \$2,000,000. There was a brief discussion. **Motion by Tabitha Trent to approve the transfer of \$881,579 to the CIP funding account as presented with the balance (\$185,597) remaining in the operating account. Second by Melanie Anderson. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 27 'FY25 Vehicle Purchase'** Executive Director Hayford discussed the FY25 budget has two vehicles listed for replacement. A 1-ton DRW with utility body for the Maintenance Department and a ½ ton 2wd pickup or Maverick for the Wastewater Department. Executive Director Hayford discussed that at least ten different dealers were contacted requesting bids on the two trucks. Executive Director Hayford reviewed the bids that were received, pricing and delivery times. Executive Director Hayford further discussed that the Maintenance Department advised that there was a second vehicle being requested due to mileage in excess of 200,000 miles. There was a brief discussion. Board comments were made regarding local purchase and could the OUA get local participation. **Motion by Melanie Anderson to approve the purchase of the Maverick from Mullinax Ford – Vero Beach in the amount of \$32,380.00 for the Wastewater Department. Second by Tabitha Trent. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

**Motion by Melanie Anderson to approve the purchase of two 1-ton trucks from Alan Jay Automotive in the amounts of \$61,523.00 each for the Maintenance Department. Second by Tabitha Trent. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 28 ‘Advanced Metering Infrastructure’** Executive Director Hayford discussed that the Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) Project was included in the 2025 Legislative Appropriation Delegation Meeting. The AMI request was for \$3,000,000 as part of the total project request to provide AMI services to all OUA water meter accounts. Executive Director Hayford discussed that additional to complete the total project cost is anticipated to come from the OUA and a SRF loan/grant. Executive Director Hayford discussed that to apply for the SRF program several work items need to be either updated or filed with the State of Florida. Holtz Consulting Engineers, Inc. was the selected engineer to assist the OUA with this. Executive Director Hayford discussed that since this is a continuation of previous work, staff requested HCE provide a modified scope of work and fee schedule to update with minor revisions to the Facility Plan and to submit a new Request for Inclusion. Executive Director Hayford discussed that with state and federal funding requests being unknown at this time, the state timeline for SRF funding is approaching. There was a brief discussion. **Motion by Melanie Anderson to approve the Holtz Consulting Engineers extended scope of work and fee schedule in the amount of \$3,440.00. Second by Tabitha Trent. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

**Motion by Melanie Anderson to authorize the Board Chairman and OUA executive staff to execute the necessary applications to file a SRF loan/grant request. Second by Steve Hargraves. Vote Unanimous (4-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 29 ‘Customer Billing Notices’** Executive Director Hayford discussed that the OUA Board took action to reduce the Rates, Fees and Charges by 75% from October 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024. Executive Director Hayford discussed that notices were placed on OUA website, social media and on the monthly billing statements. Executive Director Hayford discussed that letters were mailed out to explain the lowered rates to any current, completed or known projects. Executive Director Hayford discussed the number of letters sent out and the number of customers that either paid the fees in full or signed a Payment Agreement. Executive Director Hayford informed the board that he presented this topic at the BOCC Meeting. Executive Director Hayford discussed extending the rate reduction retroactively from January 1, 2025 to April 30, 2025. Executive Director discussed that this would need to be discussed at a Public Hearing. There was brief discussion and a Public Hearing would be advertised to the public for February 4, 2025 at 8:00AM. This item is for informational purposes only. *Tabitha Trent out at 9:00AM.*

### Staff Reports

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 30 ‘Update from Operations Director’** Jamie Mullis provided the board with a department update.

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 31 ‘Finance Report’** Finance Director Hamilton reviewed the Finance Report for period ending December 31, 2024.

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 31B ‘Investment Report’** Finance Director Hamilton reviewed the Investment Report for FY24. This agenda item is for information purposes only.

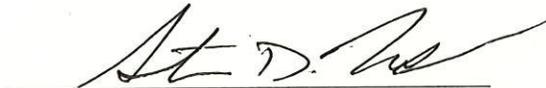
**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 32 ‘Attorney’** There were none.

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 33 ‘Executive Director’** Executive Director Hayford gave an update on current projects.

**Chairperson Nelson addressed Agenda Item No. 34 'Items from the Board' There were none.**

**There being no other business, meeting adjourned at 9:30 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)