

**OKEECHOBEE UTILITY AUTHORITY  
MEETING MINUTES**

Monday, September 13, 2021 8:30 A.M.  
Okeechobee Utility Authority  
100 SW 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Okeechobee, Florida

**Chairperson Creasman called the meeting to order at 8:36 A.M.**

**Chairperson Creasman addressed Agenda Item No. 1**, the following Okeechobee Utility Authority Board Members were present:

**Board Members:**

Melanie Anderson\*  
Tommy Clay\*  
John Creasman\*  
Steve Nelson\*  
Tabitha Trent\*

**Alternates:**

Harry Moldenhauer

**Absent:**

Jeff Fadley  
Glenn Sneider

\*Voting Board Members

**OUA Members:**

John Hayford  
George Gall  
Jamie Mullis

Tom Conely  
Michelle Willoughby

**Chairperson Creasman determined the voting members and led all participating attendees and visitors in the Pledge of Allegiance.**

**Chairperson Creasman addressed Agenda Item No. 2 ‘Southwest Service Area Public Meeting’**

**Motion by Tommy Clay to open the Public Hearing at 8:40 A.M. Second by Steve Nelson. Vote unanimous (5-0), motion carried. *Jeff Fadley in at 8:41 A.M.***

Executive Director John Hayford informed the Board that the Public Meeting is being held today to discuss Project 2 of the Southwest Service Area Project (SWSA). Executive Hayford further discussed that there are 3 projects for the SWSA. Project One is the pump station and force main connecting the area up to NW15. Project 2 is the collection system and Project 3 is Okee-Tantie. Executive Director introduced Mr. Jeffrey M. Sumner of Sumner Engineering & Consulting, Inc is the lead consultant on Project 2 and is present today to conduct a presentation of Project 2.

Mr. Sumner explained that the purpose of Project 2 is to provide wastewater service to existing OUA water service customers in the Southwest Section. Some residences experience localized flooding of

the septic tank drain fields. These septic tank drain fields add nutrient loadings of ground waters as well as the potential to affect surface waters in close proximity.

Mr. Sumner displayed a map and explained the area that is encompassed in the SWSA Project 2.

Mr. Sumner explained that the intent of the Preliminary Engineering Report was to assess the project need, environmental and economic impacts and analyze design alternatives. The three alternatives which were evaluated were gravity sewer, low pressure sewer system and vacuum sewer.

Gravity Sewer has lower operational cost and simple design. Some of the disadvantages to this alternative are the high construction costs and will be disruptive to the area due to existing infrastructure.

Low Pressure Sewer System (LPSS) has a much lower construction cost than Gravity sewer, easy to construct and very little disruption to the area. The disadvantages are high operation costs and poor history with similar systems.

Vacuum Sewer was the last alternative which was examined. The Okeechobee Utility Authority (OUA) has several of these systems throughout their service area. This alternative has a much lower cost than gravity because the lines are much shallower, easier to construct than gravity, less operation issues than LPSS and a low disruption to the area. The only real disadvantage is that it is much harder to construct than LPSS because you have active stations to build and that is more capital intensive.

Mr. Sumner explained that based on the evaluation it was recommended that the vacuum system be used for the entire project area.

Mr. Sumner discussed that in the Environmental Report, cultural resources were looked at.

It was requested that a determination from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHIPO) that are no likely impacts to culturally significant resources. SHIPO did in fact come back and say that there in fact was no impact.

The USDA required consultation with the Seminole and Miccosukee Tribes. They required an archeological study be conducted. The study did come back stating that there were no adverse effects on cultural resources.

Threatened and Endangered species were evaluated by completing a desktop analysis looking at species such as the bald eagle, tortoise, wood stork, etc. No impact was reported because a majority of the project would be in a developed area. However since two of the proposed vacuum stations were being constructed on undeveloped land, a field study was conducted for a new species. This new species is the Florida Bonneted Bat. The field study determined that there were likely no impacts on the Florida Bonneted Bat.

Wetlands were also evaluated using the National Wetlands Inventory, Land Use Codes, and USDA Soils Analysis. It was determined that no wetlands or regulated surface waters were inside the service area.

Mr. Sumner discussed the economic concerns. There are capital costs to the OUA to build this project.

- \$2.66 million to be covered by FDEP Appropriations
- \$8.39 million comprised of a USDA loan for \$7.5 million and a grant of \$883,000

Mr. Sumner further discussed the cost to homeowners.

- Septic tank abandonment and installation of piping connecting the home to the streetside collection point (estimated at \$2,785)
- OUA connection fees paid by homeowner (\$1,286.00)
- Potential financial assistance to homeowners by means of TMDL grant monies or low interest payment plans

Mr. Sumner reviewed the SWSA project which consists of three major projects

Project 1: Master Pump Station, Master Force Main and SE-2 Diversion Force Main

- The Master Pump Station was designed and sized to include some nearby undeveloped areas for future expansion
- Expected total cost is \$6.186 million fully funded by FDEP Appropriation
- Expected bidding to begin by October 2021 with bids accepted December 2021
- Expected construction to begin January 2022

Project 2: SWSA Vacuum System

- The Vacuum System is made up of two vacuum stations and the collection system
- Expected total cost is \$10.8 million for SWSA and \$612,756 for Oak Lake Estates partially funded by FDEP Appropriation with the remainder from a USDA loan
- Service approximately 700 connections (removal of 6.7 tons of nitrogen per year and 1.6 tons of phosphorus per year)
- Expected bidding to begin by Summer 2022 with bids accepted Fall 2022
- Expected construction to begin December 2022

Project 3: Okee-Tantie Force Main/SR78 Corridor

- Expected total cost is \$8.575 million Estates fully funded by FDEP Appropriation
- Expected bidding to begin by Summer 2022 with bids accepted Fall 2022
- Expected construction to begin December 2022

**Chairperson Creasman called for questions or comments from the Board.**

Board Tommy Clay asked what is the anticipated completion date. Mr. Sumner stated they are expecting a 2024 construction as this is a developed area.

Board Tommy Clay asked if the Bass Pro deal begins can projects 2 & 3 run at the same time. Mr. Sumner stated that both projects can be running at the same time. Executive Director Hayford added that even with Project 2, OUA can specify that the force main work is started early.

**Chairperson Creasman called for questions or comments from the Public.**

Donna Kersey (1302 SW 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue) – Ms. Kersey stated she was interested and asked if her property was included in this project. Executive Director Hayford stated that her home is not in this project; however, gravity sewer could be available.

Jack Lawrence (3549 SW 19<sup>th</sup> Street) Mr. Lawrence asked if once the sewer pits are installed who will be responsible for making the connection to the pit, the homeowner or OUA. Mr. Sumner stated that connection of the home to the sewer pit is the financial responsibility of the homeowner. The homeowner has the option to hire the OUA or a contractor of their choice. Mr. Lawrence is in favor of the project.

Frank Irby (1385 SE 23<sup>rd</sup> Street) Mr. Irby asked if Project 3 is completely dependent on Bass Pro. Executive Director Hayford stated Project 3 is not dependent on Bass Pro but Bass Pro certainly is a driving factor in making it functional. Mr. Irby asked if there is funding for Project 3. Executive Director Hayford stated that there is funding for the project.

Board Member Tommy Clay states that the project extends the wastewater availability to allow the connection of approximately 1600 properties in the Buckhead Ridge Area.

**Motion by Steve Nelson to close the Public Hearing at 9:14 A.M. Second by Tommy Clay. Vote unanimous (5-0).**

**Chairperson Creasman addressed Agenda Item No. 3 ‘FY22 Schedule of Rates, Fees and Charges’**

**Motion by Steve Nelson to open the Public Hearing at 9:16 A.M. Second by Tommy Clay. Vote unanimous (5-0), motion carried. John Creasman out at 9:14am.**

Finance Director Gall gave a brief presentation of the FY22 Schedule of Rates, Fees and Charges and Resolution 21-04. *John Creasman in at 9:16am.*

**Chairperson Creasman called for comments from the Public.** Frank Irby speaks to board about AGRC’s and capital connection charges.

**Motion by Steve Nelson to close the Public Hearing at 9:30 A.M. Second by Tommy Clay. Vote unanimous (5-0).**

**Chairperson Creasman called for comments from the Board.** Brief discussion regarding AGRC’s and 75% discount on installation fees and capital connection charges.

**Motion by Tommy Clay to adopt Resolution 21-04 as written and eliminate AGRC from the rate schedule. Second by Steve Nelson. Vote unanimous (5-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Creasman addressed Agenda Item No. 4 ‘FY22 Capital Connection Charges and Installation Fees for Water and Wastewater’**

**Motion by Steve Nelson to open the Public Hearing at 9:37 A.M. Second by Tommy Clay. Vote unanimous (5-0), motion carried.**

Executive Director Hayford reads resolution by title only.

**Chairperson Creasman called for comments from the Public.** Frank Irby speaks to the board about Capital Connection Charges and the financial impact on residents. Tommy Clay out at 9:40 A.M.

**Motion by Steve Nelson to close the Public Hearing at 9:40 A.M. Second by Melanie Anderson. Vote unanimous (4-0).**

**Chairperson Creasman called for comments from the Board. There were none.**

**Motion by Steve Nelson to adopt Resolution 21-05 as presented. Second by Melanie Anderson. Vote unanimous (4-0), motion carried. Tommy Clay in at 9:42 A.M.**

**Chairperson Creasman addressed Agenda Item No. 5 ‘FY22 Final Budget and Resolution 21-06’**

**Motion by Steve Nelson to open the Public Hearing at 9:43 A.M. Second by Tommy Clay. Vote unanimous (5-0), motion carried.**

Executive Director Hayford reads resolution by title only. Finance Director Gall gave a brief presentation of the FY22 Final Budget and Resolution 21-06.

**Chairperson Creasman called for comments from the Public. There were none.**

**Motion by Steve Nelson to close the Public Hearing at 9:48 A.M. Second by Tommy Clay. Vote unanimous (5-0).**

**Chairperson Creasman called for comments from the Board. There were none.**

**Motion by Steve Nelson to adopt Resolution 21-06 as presented. Second by Tommy Clay. Vote unanimous (5-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Creasman addressed Agenda Item No. 6 ‘Meeting Minutes from August 9, 2021. Motion by Tommy Clay to approve the Meeting Minutes from August 9, 2021 as presented. Second by Steve Nelson. Vote unanimous (5-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Creasman addressed Agenda Item No. 7 ‘Employee Recognition’** Chairperson Creasman recognized Rodney Arnold, who was not present, for his 25 years of service to the OUA.

**Chairperson Creasman addressed Agenda Item No. 8 ‘Consent Agenda’** Executive Director Hayford added three invoices from Sumner Engineering & Consulting, Inc. **Motion by Steve Nelson to approve the Consent Agenda as amended:**

**Consent Agenda Item No. 9 ‘Finance Report for the period ending August 31, 2021**

**Consent Agenda Item No. 10 ‘Pay Application No. 5 from PRP Construction Group, LLC – Oak Lake Estates in the amount of \$153,936.68**

**Consent Agenda Item No. 11 ‘Invoice from Sumner Engineering & Consulting, Inc. – SW Wastewater Service Area Project (AACE Invoice) in the amount of \$6,333.50’**

**Consent Agenda Item No. 12 ‘Invoice from Eckler Engineering, Inc. – Pine Ridge Park Utility Improvement in the amounts of \$30,018.10’**

**Consent Agenda Item No. 13 ‘Invoices from Holtz Consulting Engineers, Inc. – Advanced Meter Infrastructure in the amounts \$5,307.60 and \$1,769.20’**

**Consent Agenda Item No. 14 ‘Invoices from Holtz Consulting Engineers, Inc. – FDOT Water Main Replacement US441SE in the amounts \$8,012.10, \$3,927.50 and \$1,571.00**

**Consent Agenda Item No. 15 ‘Invoices from Holtz Consulting Engineers, Inc. – FDOT Water Main Replacement US441SE (Hinterland Invoice) in the amounts \$79,201.50**

**Consent Agenda Item No. 16 ‘Invoice from Holtz Consulting Engineers, Inc. – State Revolving Fund Request for Inclusion for AMI Program in the amounts \$2,380.00’**

**Consent Agenda Item No. 17 ‘Invoices from OneWater, Inc. – Lakeview Estates WWTP in the amounts of \$112,195.00’**

**Consent Agenda Item No. 18 ‘Invoice from Raftelis in the amount of \$6,230.00**

**Consent Agenda Item No. 19 ‘Invoice from Thorn Run Partners in the amount of \$3,500.00’**

**Consent Agenda Item No. 20 ‘Invoice from MacVicar in the amount of \$250.00’**

**Additional Item “Invoice from Sumner Engineering & Consulting, Inc. – SW Wastewater Service Area Project (Part D) in the amount of \$1,561.00’**

**Additional Item “Invoice from Sumner Engineering & Consulting, Inc. – SW Wastewater Service Area Project (Part E) in the amount of \$61,550.16**

**Additional Item “Invoice from Sumner Engineering & Consulting, Inc. – SW 5<sup>TH</sup> Avenue Sewer in the amount of \$6,985.68**

**Second by Tommy Clay. Vote unanimous (5-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Creasman addressed Agenda Item No. 21 ‘USDA Loan Agreement** Executive Director Hayford advised that the USDA sent out a letter (Notification of Initial Application Review) on August 26, 2021, which provided the eligibility and funding levels provided by the USDA towards the Southwest Service Area Septic to Sewer Project. The USDA agreed to a funding level of \$8,391,000 comprised of a loan (\$7,508,000) and grant (\$883,000). The USDA has sent numerous documents that need to be completed, executed and submitted along with the executed Letter of Intent to Meet Conditions and Form RD 1940-1, Request for Obligation of funds. **Motion by Tommy Clay to allow OUA Board Chairman and staff to execute and submit USDA documents pertaining to this USDA loan application. Second by Steve Nelson Vote unanimous (5-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Creasman addressed Agenda Item No. 22 ‘Beaty Easement Purchase’** Executive Director Hayford discussed that Project 1, the SWSA Sanitary Force Main Project will cross under State 70. At the crossing, the property on the southside of SR 70 is the Beaty property. The right-of-way for SR 70 is narrow with very little area for construction of the force main. FDOT will require the OUA piping to be rather deep for the crossing. On the northside, the OUA will utilize the existing right-of-way associated with the County road. Negotiations between OUA staff and the attorney representing the property have reached a verbal agreement on the costs associated with the easement. The property owner has agreed to \$7,500 for the easement and \$5,000 for attorney’s fees (time and incidentals) for a total cost of \$12,500. It is anticipated that this cost of the easement will reflect in lower construction costs. **Motion by Tommy Clay to accept the Beaty Easement purchase at \$7,500.00 plus \$5000.00 for attorney fees for a total of \$12,500.00. Second by Steven Nelson Vote unanimous (5-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Creasman addressed Agenda Item No. 23 ‘City Commerce Park Land Purchase’** *John Creasman out 10:00 A.M.* Executive Director Hayford discussed the City of Okeechobee

development requirements protects land surrounding potable wells from encroachment of or development of lands near potable water wells. Therefore, development on lots 1, 2 & 3 are restricted and most likely not developable as industrial property. The City of Okeechobee, the city has agreed to sell to the OUA these three lots at \$3,000 per acre price for a total of \$32,640. *John Creasman in at 10:02 A.M.* **Motion by Tommy Clay to approve the purchase of three land parcels from the City of Okeechobee at \$3,000 per acre for a total of \$32,640.00 with the exception that the OUA does not have to maintain and the city will close the right-of-way. Second by Tabitha Trent. Vote unanimous (5-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Creasman addressed Agenda Item No. 24 ‘Kings Bay Maintenance Agreement’** Executive Director Hayford discussed that as required by King’s Bay Agreement, the OUA is to review the past year’s expenses incurred by the King’s Bay development. After review and tabulation of these expenses, a monthly service fee is to be established for the coming year. OUA staff reviewed the calculation used in previous years (all labor, vehicle/equipment, parts and administrative charge) and a \$9.60 monthly charge will be the highest charge. Since OUA personnel time has already been budgeted for the year and these costs have been factored in to the base fees charged, as a one-time consideration, OUA staff deleted all labor and vehicle/equipment use during normal working hours. Only considering the labor and vehicle/equipment use during after hours, keeping the parts and administrative charges from before, this would provide for a monthly charge of \$6.41. There was brief discussion regarding the fees and maintenance agreement with King’s Bay. **Motion by Tommy Clay to approve setting the monthly maintenance cost at \$9.60 for the King’s Bay accounts. Second by Steve Nelson Vote unanimous (5-0), motion carried.**

**Chairperson Creasman addressed Agenda Item No. 25 ‘Public Comments’** Frank Irby requests that the OUA make the 3% rate increase reflects the actual cost. Brief discussion regarding costs of goods and services in today’s market.

**Chairperson Creasman addressed Agenda Item No. 26 ‘Items from the Attorney’** There were none

**Chairperson Creasman addressed Agenda Item No. 27 ‘Items from the Executive Director’** Executive Director Hayford gave an update on current projects. Executive Director discussed that the Okeechobee Economic Development Corporation (OCEDC) is requesting an appointment of a OCEDC Board member from the OUA. Chairperson Creasman recommends that that the Executive Director position be assigned to OCEDC board annually.

**Chairperson Creasman addressed Agenda Item No. 28 ‘Items from the Board’** None requiring action.

**There being no other business, meeting adjourned at 10:50 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

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Executive Director (Secretary)