

City delays its decision on radio system

By Pete Gawda
Okeechobee News

The City of Okeechobee's participation with the county in the Statewide Law Enforcement Radio System (SLERS) received a temporary setback at the Tuesday, Oct. 6 city council meeting.

In other action, the county's proposed new emergency operations center took another step toward reality at that meeting. The council also took action to update their pension programs.

After a lengthy discussion with deputy county administrator Jim Threewits and representatives of the Communications Division

of Harris Corporation, suppliers of the radio equipment, the council decided to table any action until the next meeting. While Mayor Jim Kirk stated that SLERS would probably be the cheapest alternative, the council wanted more specific information on how the city's participation in the system would be financed. There was concern that the final cost could be more than what was budgeted for the system. The current city budget contains \$75,000 for SLERS. However, it is estimated that the city's share of the cost for SLERS will be \$112,000.

The council held the first reading and set a date of Nov. 3 as the final public hearing

date on the county's request to close NW Seventh Avenue from NW Fourth Street to NW Sixth Street and to close NW Fifth Street from NW Seventh Avenue to the dead end for the purpose of constructing a new emergency operations center. The council also held the first readings and set Nov. 3 as the date for final public hearings for three separate ordinances to amend the general employees/OUA pension trust fund, police officer's pension trust fund and firefighters'

pension trust fund to comply with current laws.

Turning to other business, the council granted Central Elementary School's request for the temporary closing of SW Fifth Avenue between SW Sixth and SW Seventh Street on Friday, Oct. 30 for a Halloween Carnival Festival.

The mayor presented a certificate of appreciation to Penny Revels for service on the code enforcement board.

The council voted to meet once a month for the next three months with meetings on Oct. 6, Nov. 3 and Dec. 1. The December meeting will start at 7 p.m., instead of the usual stating time of 6 p.m., because of the Christmas Tree Lightning at 5:30 p.m.

Post your opinions in the Public Issues Forum at www.newszap.com. Reporter Pete Gawda can be reached at pgawda@newszap.com.

Construction licensing board reinstates license

By Pete Gawda
Okeechobee News

When they met Tuesday afternoon, Oct. 6 the Okeechobee County Construction Industry Licensing Board faced four action items—two requests for contractor's licenses and two alleged building code violations.

However, the board only acted on one item. The board reinstated the license of Ron Vanderhoff of Accent Tile and Marble. He had previously been licensed to do business in the county. However, as the result

of an automobile accident, Mr. Vanderhoff had let his license expire. As for the other license request, the board took no action because the applicant was not present.

Turning to violations, it was determined that the alleged code violations of James Sinamore of Top Notch Installations were outside the board's scope of authority. The board tabled action against Wilhelm Burkhardt d/b/a Burkhardt & Sons to allow for further research.

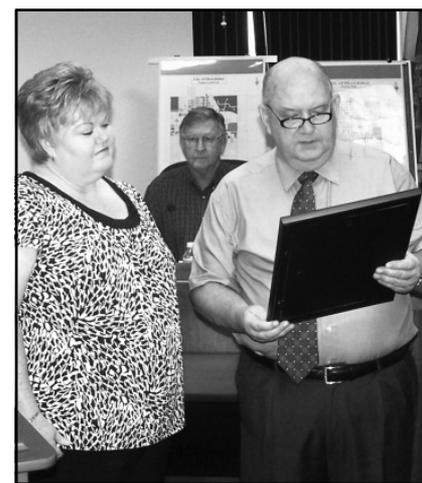
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Special to the Okeechobee News/Dowling Watford

Couples honored

Longtime Kiwanis Club members Red Larson and Clayton Williams celebrated their wedding anniversaries - with their lovely wives at the Oct. 8, meeting of the Kiwanis Club of Okeechobee. The two couples' anniversaries add up to 100 years of marriage with Red and Reda Larson married 62 years and Clayton and Jacque Williams married 38 years. The couples shared anniversary cake with all the Kiwanis members.



Okeechobee News/Pete Gawda

City recognition

At the Okeechobee City Council meeting on Tuesday evening, Oct. 6, Mayor Jim Kirk presented Penny Revels with a Certificate of Appreciation for service on the city code enforcement board.



Okeechobee News/Linda Bridges

Rotary welcomes new member

Rotary President-Mike Costopoulos welcomes new Rotary member Lyle Fried-Director of Lamb of God Recovery Center. Meetings are every Tuesday, from noon-1 p.m. at the Okeechobee Golden Corral. Rotarians use the 4-Way Test of the things we think, say or do in building a better community, including: 1.) Is it the truth? 2.) Is it fair to all concerned? 3.) Will it build good will and better friendships? 4.) Will it be beneficial to all concerned? For more information on becoming a new member or being a guest speaker, please call 863-763-1120.



Special to the Okeechobee News/EES

Fire Safety Week

Okeechobee County firefighters visit Everglades Elementary School. Students learn ways to safeguard and escape from fire while keeping everyone safe.