

City Hall, Monroe, Louisiana
April 12, 2022
6:00p.m.

There was a legal and regular session of the City Council of the City of Monroe, Louisiana held this date at the Council's regular meeting place, the Council Chamber, City Hall Building, Monroe, Louisiana.

The Honorable Carday Marshall, Sr., Chairman, called the meeting to order. He then asked the clerk to call roll.

There were present: Council members Mr. Harvey, Mrs. Ezernack, Ms. Woods, Mr. Marshall, and Mrs. Dawson

There was absent: None

Chairman Marshall announced that a quorum was present, and that the Invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance would be led by Councilman Harvey or his designee.

Mr. Troy Bart Lizenby, Friends of Forsythe Park, came forward and led the Invocation.

COMMUNICATIONS & SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Mr. Harvey thanked Mr. Lizenby for being a proud member of the community and for his involvement in the City of Monroe.

Mrs. Ezernack welcomed everyone that came out to the City Council meeting. Mrs. Ezernack wished everyone a Happy Easter and wanted everyone to keep in mind what the holiday is all about.

Ms. Woods thanked everyone for coming out and wished everyone a happy and safe Easter holiday season. Ms. Woods offered her condolences to the grieving families of the recent gun violence in the community. She acknowledged the Mayor and his administration for their efforts on finding a solution for the community. Ms. Woods stated in her opinion the answer is not to put our youth in jail and throw away the key. She believes we can help the youth in the community by finding a reform. Ms. Woods also mentioned the mental illness within our community and the affect it's having on our youth. On another note, Ms. Woods announced District (3) and Carrol High School alumni will be having a meeting Thursday April 28, 2022 at 6pm at Marbles Recreation Center on how to reform our community. Ms. Woods reiterated on the importance of reaching out to our youth in the community.

Mrs. Dawson thanked everyone for attending the City Council meeting. She acknowledged the bereaved families of the tragedies and deaths that have transpired in the City of Monroe as well. Mrs. Dawson announced there will be an Easter extravaganza at the Louisiana Purchase Gardens and Zoo on Saturday April 16, 2022, 10 am until 2 pm. She further noted the boat and train rides will be available and two-dollar bunny pictures. The entry fee will be ten dollars for adults and six dollars for children ages 2 and up. Also Friday April 15, 2022, the Showboat Classic will be held at West Monroe High School gym at 6:30 pm. She also mentioned the 2nd Annual Unity Jam Session will be on April 22, 2022, at 7:30 pm at the Tabatorium and for more information contact Ms. Jualea Hayes. Ms. Dawson also mentioned District (5) Easter egg hunt will be at the Jesse Williams Park on Marc Street for more information contact Pastor Stonewall Hunter at True Vine or Pastor Rico Tyler at St. Luke. She noted she is praying everyone have a safe and wonderful Easter holiday.

Mayor Ellis echoed the sentiment of the City Council about the tragic week of lives lost in the City of Monroe. Mayor stated losing elders that were the voice of the community concerns him. Mayor Ellis introduced Ms. Lakiesha Ballock, DBE Coordinator Specialist, she will be working with Mr. Curt Kelly, Purchasing Director. Mayor also introduced Ms. Nirali Patel, Main Street Director, the City is excited to have their leadership on board. On another note, Dr. Allison F. Camaeno, ULM Women's Co-Chair, presented Mayor Ellis with the Vanguard Award established in 2018 that symbolize gender equality in the workplace and community.

Mr. Marshall expressed his concerns with the recent violent activity in the City of Monroe involving our youth, and that the City has been meeting to discuss how to start helping our community. He said the events that have occurred in the past weeks have been going on for decades and everyone must be apart for us to move forward to help the youth in our community. Mr. Marshall reiterated that reaching out to the troubled youth starts with the leaders of the community. He also stated the City should provide the youth with the information to resources that can help them. Mr. Marshall also noted he put together a task force that have been going out to the schools and neighborhoods to talk with the City's youth. He stated in his opinion if you are not part of the solution, you are part of the problem. On another note, Mr. Marshall announced the Future Lawyer Academy will also be having an Easter egg hunt at Chennault Park April 16, 2022 1pm until 5pm free to all. He also mentioned on May 7, 2022 Omega Psi Phi will have a mother and son dance from 7pm until 10pm at ULM Sub Ball Room. He noted further that the Krewe of Rivere will be having the Claws for Cause fundraiser for Med-Camp at the Holsum Building on April 30, 2022 from 11am until 3pm activities include petting zoo, face painting, and carnival activities for the kids. Mr. Marshall piggyback off Councilwoman Woods in reference to Carroll Jr. High and High School losing their youth to gun violence.

Upon motion of Ms. Woods, seconded by Mrs. Dawson the minutes of the Legal and Regular Session of March 22, 2022 were approved. Mrs. Ezernack abstained she was not present at the last meeting.

The following condemnation was considered:

1. 2815 Dick Taylor Street (D4) (Owners-McKinley Investment LLC; Mckinley Investments, LLC c/o Perry McKinley; Alan Investments, III, LLC; Alan Investments III, LLC c/o National Registered Agents, Inc) Notice to show cause was served. Photographic evidence was presented. Upon motion of Chairman Marshall, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved the building was condemned, and the property owner was given 60 days in which to bring the structure into compliance with the Code or demolish the Structure and clean the lot.

Mr. Tommy James, Code Enforcement Officer, stated this is an open dilapidated structure, and it has been that way since January 2021, and that his office made contact with one of the property owners attorneys. They are asking for 60 days to bring structure up to Code.

Mr. Mckinley, property owner was present and in agreement with the 60 days to bring the property up to Code.

ACCEPTANCE OR REJECTION OF BIDS:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8229 accepting the bid of Lott Oil Company, for petroleum products supply and, further authorizing an authorized city representative, to enter into and execute a contract for said items. (There were no public comments.)

(b) Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8230 accepting the bids of McRoberts Sales Co. Inc., for animal foods - IF Mackerel Pacific, IGG Salmon, and IGF Smelt and, further authorizing an authorized city representative, to enter into and execute a contract for said items. (There were no public comments.)

(c) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8231 accepting the bid of TDC, LLC, for Water Treatment Chemical – Liquid Caustic Soda 50% and, further authorizing an authorized city representative, to enter into and execute a contract for said items. (There were no public comments.)

(d) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8232 accepting the bid of Industrial Research Corporation., for Water Treatment Chemical – Liquid Ammonium Sulfate (Totes & Drums) and Liquid Chlorine and, further authorizing an authorized city representative, to enter into and execute a contract for said items. (There were no public comments.)

Council:

(a) Upon motion of Ms. Woods, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8233 recognizing the month of June as Juneteenth Celebration Month in the City of Monroe and further providing with respect thereto. (Woods) (There were no public comments.)

Ms. Woods noted that Juneteenth officially became a national holiday last year and there are many organizations wanting to plan celebrations for the holiday. She suggested that the holiday be a month-long celebration, therefore, giving organizations and individuals opportunities to plan events for the Juneteenth celebration in the City of Monroe.

Chairman Marshall suggested the City consider working together in the future to make Juneteenth a big celebration and not another event that will divide the community.

(b) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8234 approving a contract between the City of Monroe and North Delta Regional Planning and Development District for Technical Services in conjunction with the Reapportionment of the City of Monroe in accordance with the 2020 Census and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

(c) Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8235 of the City Council of the City of Monroe, Louisiana, authorizing a Contract with Allen, Green & Williamson, LLP to provide services as outlined in the Audit Engagement Letter for the fiscal year ending April 30, 2022 and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

(d) Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8236 of the City Council of the City of Monroe, Louisiana, authorizing a Contract with Allen, Green & Williamson, LLP to provide and apply the Statewide Agreed Upon Procedures from the Louisiana Legislative Auditor on the control and compliance areas identified in the LLA's Statewide Agreed Upon Procedures for the fiscal year ending April 30, 2022 and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Department of Administration:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Dawson, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved to consider an Application by Anna Denny dba Cooter Bay Downtown - CBay LLC, 209 Olive St., Monroe, LA 71201 for a New 2022 Class A Alcoholic Beverage Permit. The Monroe Police Department has no disqualifying records and Sales Tax has been approved. (Distance Report Cleared) Cert. of Occupy Cleared. (There were no public comments.)

(b) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved to consider an Application by Sookham Dhillon, Arjun Dhaliwal, Simran Dhaliwal Emaus, Satveer Kaur Dhaliwal dba WGG LLC – Now & Save #8, 513 Winnsboro Rd., Monroe, LA 71201 for a New 2022 Class B Alcoholic Beverage Permit. The Monroe Police Department has no disqualifying records and Sales Tax has been approved. (Distance Report Cleared) Cert. of Occupy Cleared. (There were no public comments.)

Ms. Woods asked after the vote if the City Council is being live streamed via social media still.

Ms. Woods noted she was getting concerns from the community saying they can't see the City Council meeting online and she also expressed the City should make sure the live feed is available to the community in the future.

Ms. Gwen Elliot, IT Department, informed Ms. Woods that they are having technical difficulties and it is available on channel 75 live as well as being recorded at this time.

Department of Planning & Urban Development:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approve a Resolution No. 8237 authorizing Mayor Friday Ellis to accept a grant award, "fy 22 AmeriCorps

Vista State Continuation Grant,” and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Mrs. Ellen Hill, PUD Director, began a presentation explaining AmeriCorps Vista, a national service program, which began in 1965. Mrs. Hill noted the City of Monroe applied to become a sponsor in 2019 giving the youth in the community a chance to serve as AmeriCorps members. AmeriCorps Vista priorities are Neighborhood Revitalization and Development of Comprehensive Community Model. She further explained the project goals of Vista are to reduce and alleviate poverty in the targeted neighborhoods by assisting the City in developing programs that will improve economic status and physical wellness. She noted Vista is now hiring summer associates and application deadline is April 25, 2022, must be 18 or older to apply.

Mayor Ellis wanted to know how the community can nominate someone to the Vista program.

Ms. Hill stated all the information will be on the website, but they can also contact the Community Developments Office at 329-2256 and ask for Ms. Takia Hill the Vista member working on recruitment. She also noted the benefits available with becoming a Vista member such as a living allowance and education award that can be used towards college tuition or student loans.

(b) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8238 authorizing Friday Ellis, Mayor, to declare the week of April 11-15, 2022, National Community Development Week to celebrate the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Mrs. Jawaun Downs, Director of Community Development, stated Community Development week is celebrated across the nation every year where they speak about their community block grant projects. Mrs. Downs mentions investments including housing rehabilitation, computer lab at Benoit Rec. Center, fire equipment, Meals on Wheels, and parks outdoor restroom improvements. Mrs. Downs also mention in April of 2020, the City of Monroe was awarded \$820,126.00 to respond to the pandemic; therefore, giving resources that would provide rental & mortgage assistance to families, provide rehab for senior citizens, and invest in small businesses to stabilize their business.

Mrs. Dawson wanted to remind everyone about the Home in Monroe Expo on Saturday April 23, 2022, at 10am until 1pm.

(c) Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8239 authorizing Friday Ellis, Mayor, or his designee to execute a Professional Services Agreement with MidCity Redevelopment Alliance for Professional Services and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Mrs. Ellen Hill stated the Home in Monroe is the City’s housing program and they have partnered with MidCity Redevelopment Alliance using foundation funds through a Chase Grant to support the work. She further explained that they provide housing classes and financial counseling for the Homebuyer’s certification class. HUD requires the City to have certified housing counselors working with participants that are going through the homebuyer program. Mrs. Hill also extended the invitation to the Housing Expo mentioned by Councilwoman Dawson.

Legal Department:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8240 stating the City of Monroe’s endorsement of Chef Hans Building, LLC and their Project #20210515-RTA to participate in the benefits of the Louisiana Restoration Tax Abatement Program.

Ms. Woods said she spoke with Mrs. Sturdivant to ask that Mrs. Liz Pierre come to the City Council meeting to discuss how the Restoration Tax Program works.

Mrs. Liz Pierre, NELA Economic Partnership, explained there are 3 items on the agenda that relates to the Louisiana Restoration Tax Program the first is an initial application for the program and the second two items are application for an extension to the Program. Mrs. Pierre further

explained that the Louisiana Restoration incentive that is offered through Louisiana Economic Development offers owner of commercial structures and owner-occupied residents within downtown districts, historic districts, and opportunities zones to freeze property taxes for 5 years at your pre-restoration value. Also mentioning after 5 years the property owner can apply for an extension but owner must come to City Council for approval and then be approved by the Board of Commerce Industry in Baton Rouge, LA with the Governor's signature. She further noted after that time the property owner continues to pay property tax at the new value of the structure.

Ms. Maria Brown wanted to know what the incentive and benefits of the Restoration Tax for the community.

Mrs. Pierre noted the rules are available on the Louisiana Economic Development website in detail and there is not a requirement to hire a certain amount of people the incentive is to redevelop building in the communities. She also stated it is not just for commercial businesses but for residents who occupy the homes in the qualified areas.

Ms. Maria Brown wanted to know how to apply for the Louisiana Restoration Tax Program.

Mrs. Liz Pierre says the application is through the Louisiana Economic Development and she receives all notifications for Ouachita Parish to check if it is in the qualified districts. She further mentioned the qualified districts are Downtown Economic Development Districts, Historic Districts, and Opportunity Zones.

Chairman Marshall wanted to know if Cultural Districts are included.

Mrs. Angie Sturdivant, City Attorney, noted in the first paragraph of the resolution it explains which areas qualify for the tax abatement.

Mrs. Pierre mentioned the opportunity zones became eligible also.

(b) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8241 stating the City of Monroe's endorsement of Vantage Health Plan, Inc. and Affinity Health Group, L.L.C. and their Project #20140903-RTA to continue their participation in the benefits of the Louisiana Restoration Tax Abatement Program. (There were no public comments.)

(c) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8242 stating the City of Monroe's endorsement of Vantage Health Plan, Inc. and Affinity Health Group, L.L.C. and their Project #20161399-RTA to continue their participation in the benefits of the Louisiana Restoration Tax Abatement Program. (There were no public comments.)

Mayor's Office:

(a) Upon motion of Ms. Woods, seconded by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8243 authorizing the City of Monroe to enter into a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement with the Louisiana Department of the Treasury and the State of Louisiana for the state funds appropriated for the Southside Economic Development District and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Department of Public Works:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8244 authorizing Mayor Friday Ellis to execute an Agreement with the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (State Project No. H.014713) Airfield Lighting Rehabilitation – Phase II (construction) and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

(b) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8245 accepting the bid of Ouachita Electrical Contractor, LLC, in the amount of \$674,975.00 for rehabilitation of airfield lighting at the Monroe Regional Airport, State Project No. H.013624, and further authorizing a designated city representative to enter into and execute a contract for said work.

Mrs. Kenya Roberson, Regional Black Chamber of Commerce, wanted to know what the DBE goal for the project is.

Mr. Harvey and Mrs. Sturdivant stated the goal is 4.5%.

(c) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8246 accepting the bid of Environmental Technical Sales, Inc., for WPCU UV Disinfection System Parts and, further authorizing an authorized city representative, to enter into and execute a contract for said items. (There were no public comments.)

(d) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved to consider a request from the Public Works Division for Council approval for authorization for an authorized city representative to advertise for bids for the Monroe Transit System Autonomous Wheelchair Securement System Project. The source of funds is 100% Cares Act Funds. (There were no public comments.)

Engineering Services:

(a) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8247 accepting as substantially complete work done by and between the City of Monroe and CW&W Contractors, Inc., for the Riverbarge Street Improvements, and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS & ORDINANCES:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance adopting and amending the Zoning Map for the City of Monroe, Louisiana and authorizing the Clerk to publish notice of a Public Hearing to zone a ±0.75-acre tract of land, from being located in Ouachita Parish to the R-4 (High Density Multi-Family Residence) District, in order for the applicant to construct duplexes. **200-206 Martinez Street and 601-605 Chatham Drive APPLICANT: Gipson J. Properties, LLC (P&Z)** (There were no public comments.)

(b) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance adopting and amending the Zoning Map for the City of Monroe, Louisiana and authorizing the Clerk to publish notice of a Public Hearing to zone a ±0.75-acre tract of land, from being located in Ouachita Parish to the R-4 (High Density Multi-Family Residence) District, in order for the applicant to construct duplexes. **200-206 Martinez Street and 601-605 Chatham Drive APPLICANT: Gipson J. Properties, LLC (P&Z)** (There were no public comments.)

(c) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance authorizing a Lease Agreement between the City of Monroe and DRP Masonry LLC, for the lease of a portion of a city owned parking lot and further providing with respect thereto. (Legal) (There were no public comments.)

(d) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance authorizing the City of Monroe to repeal and replace the Monroe Regional Airport's Minimum Standards for Commercial Aeronautical Activities and further providing with respect thereto. (Legal)

Mr. Travis Cripps, General Manager of Avflight MLU, stated in his opinion the proposed minimum standards are a violation of the lease with the City of Monroe. Mr. Cripps explained Avflight senior leadership has been in communication with the city attorney and airport management to get an understanding on how the minimum standards could affect the business. Mr. Cripps stated the senior leadership was informed their concerns of the minimum standards would be addressed with the City attorney before it is brought to the City Council.

Mr. Harvey asked what their concerns of the minimum standards being changed are.

Mr. Cripps said there are several concerns with the minimum standard changes, but he doesn't feel adequate to address the concerns. He also noted the main concerns is not having communication after the initial contact with the city attorney.

Mr. Harvey explained this is an introduction there is a two-week period between now and final. He asked if the minimum standards are affecting the business and what is the impact on it. He

further explained that FAA guidelines indicates the direction the City needs to continue FAA funding.

Mr. Cripps reiterated that he doesn't feel qualified to speak on the topic but any questions or concerns he would relay to senior leadership.

Mr. Harvey questioned what the impact of the minimum standards for the business is again.

Mrs. Ezernack noted that the information would be discussed with the City attorney and the business before it is bought back to City Council for final adoption in two-weeks.

Mr. Cripps stated one of the concerns is Avflight will not have time to bring the business up to minimum standards.

Mr. Harvey wanted to know if there were any minimum standards that can impact the business from performing current duties.

Mr. Cripps said no, not that he is aware of.

Mr. Harvey expressed he is still confused how the standards are impacting the business.

Mr. Marshall wanted to know if the standards are only impacting Mr. Cripps business or are other businesses being impacted by the new standards.

Mr. Harvey stated in his opinion it seems as if it only impacts competition.

Ms. Woods wanted to know how long Mr. Cripps has been trying to contact the city attorney.

Mr. Cripps explained he is not certain the amount of communication between the city attorney, Avflight senior management, and Monroe Regional Airport management.

Ms. Woods wanted to know what Mr. Cripps position is at the airport and further expressed her concerns on him not having enough information to discuss the issue with the City Council. She also mentioned if Mr. Cripps is reaching out but not getting a response that is something that needs to be addressed.

Mrs. Angie Sturdivant, City Attorney, stated Council approved the City to hire an attorney that would assist with this contract, and they have been in contact with Avflight numerous times. She noted the FAA instructed the City to review the current 2014 minimum standards. She further noted that Mr. Butcher held a tenant meeting at the airport to consider all comments regarding the new minimum standards. Mrs. Sturdivant also mention the FAA deadline is April 29, 2022 and if the deadline is missed it will cost the City tons of money.

Mr. Cripps stated, again, the main concerns are the communication between the city attorney and Avflight leadership. He further noted concerns of the April 29th deadline to work out any issues for the business to meet the minimum standards.

(e) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance amending Chapter 7 of the Monroe City Code Entitled "Aviation" and further providing with respect thereto. (Legal) (There were no public comments.)

RESOLUTIONS AND ORDINANCES FOR SECOND READING AND FINAL ADOPTION AND SUBJECT TO PUBLIC HEARING:

The Chairman opened the Public Hearing and seeing no one come forward the Hearing was declared closed.

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved an Ordinance No. 12,108 authorizing the City of Monroe to enter into a pipeline and aboveground facilities servitude and easement between the City of Monroe and Atmos Energy Corporation, and further providing with respect thereto. (Legal) (There were no public comments.)

The Chairman opened the Public Hearing and seeing no one come forward the Hearing was declared closed.

(b) Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved an Ordinance No.12,109 authorizing the City of Monroe to take Corporeal Possession of the property described below and sell to Joseph and Milleny Walters all rights, title, and interest that the City may have acquired to the lot 15, square 2, Blanks Addition, Ouachita Parish, 205 Morton St., Monroe, La, by Adjudication at Tax Sale dated June 13, 2016, and further with respect thereto. (Legal) (There were no public comments.)

The Chairman opened the Public Hearing and seeing no one come forward the Hearing was declared closed.

(c) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved an Ordinance No. 12,110 authorizing the City of Monroe to acquire a certain parcel of real property from Harrellco Properties situated in Ouachita Parish with a municipal address of 710 S. 4th Street, Monroe, La and further providing with respect thereto. (PUD) (There were no public comments.)

The Chairman opened the Public Hearing:

(d) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and approved an Ordinance No.12,111 approving a Collective Bargaining Agreement between the City of Monroe and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO, Local No. 2388 and further providing with respect thereto. (Ms. Woods voting no.)

Ms. Patricia Ramirez, American Federation of State, Country, and Municipal (AFSCME), noted all union members were able to participate in this democratic process. She stated she is hopeful the City will honor the voices of the members and certify this contract.

Mr. Henry Wilhite, President of Local 2388, gave City Council a flyer published by Ms. Patricia Ramirez who is a union representative showing highlights of the contract. He also stated this a good contract in his opinion and asked Council to approve.

Mr. Jake Smith, Union Secretary Treasure, stated he believes the voting process was done fairly and there is financial gain for all employees in this contract.

Note: Mr. Marshall announced the emergency thunderstorm warning currently spotted in the Swartz area and he stated if the weather gets worse, they will have to convene City Council meeting to a later date but at this time we will continue expeditiously until further notice on the weather.

Mr. Michael Castor stated he was vice-president of Local 2388 and now he is a retiree of (AFSCME). He said four years ago is when the vote took place, but some employees now are saying they don't want it. He stated if there is an issue with the contract go back to the table but don't stop this contract people need money in his opinion.

Mr. Robert Johnson, 2608 Cooley Street, stated he is speaking as a former union president and wanted to be able to see what is in the contract and what is not in the contract. He stated in his opinion the internal problem is non-union members should not have a part in the union workplace decisions. Mr. Johnson stated in 2014 the union hired the Gallagher Group and Archie Group but Local 2388 is the only Local that doesn't have a pay scale inside the contract. He noted to his knowledge there has not been a union meeting in months prior to this contract. He further noted his concerns of the no demotion for disciplinary action being taking out of the contract.

Mrs. Ezernack wanted Ms. Sturdivant to explain why the demotion disciplinary action was taken out the contract and if so, can it be amended.

Mrs. Sturdivant noted in Section 3 of the contract it states the employee must agree to demotion in lieu of termination to vacant permanent position for which they are qualified. She stated the City approved hiring Gallagher to study all job duties of union employees to determine the increase in pay wages based on similar market jobs. She further noted employees that were not at the minimum market wage will receive between a 5 and 37 percent raise for some employees. She further noted Mr. Johnson is correct employees that are at ten dollars and hour are being brought up to eleven and hour.

Ms. Woods wanted to know the meaning of the contract being pulled and coming back.

Mrs. Sturdivant explained the Union Executive Members are voted in to represent the union employees at the negotiating table. She further explained everyone agreed on the contract and the only option at this time is to approve or deny.

Mr. Marshall wanted to know did the union employees understand what they were voting on.

Mrs. Sturdivant stated to her knowledge the union employees understood what they were voting for and AFSCME representative came in to answer any questions the employees had at that time.

Mrs. Ezernack questioned if everything in the contract was explained at the vote and prior to the vote.

Mrs. Sturdivant said yes that is correct and there couldn't be a vote until the contract was finalized.

Ms. Maria Brown said the contract in her opinion is ambiguous meaning one sided.

Mr. Harvey noted the AFSCME flyer was not produced by the City it is produced by the Union.

Ms. Brown noted the flyer does not correspond with the contract.

Mr. Harvey reiterated that the flyer is not part of the City Council or the Administration.

Ms. Brown questioned how non-union members are voting on the contract. She stated the city workers asked her to come and speak for them on issues that are not related to the contract.

Mr. Harvey mentions just for clarity the pay wage percentages?

Mrs. Angie Sturdivant noted she doesn't believe there is a fifteen cent pay raise in the contract.

Mrs. Stacy Rowell, Director of Administration, stated it is the ten eighty-five below the minimum.

Ms. Woods and Mrs. Dawson wanted an understanding of the actual percentage that the pay raise will be.

Mrs. Sturdivant said it depends on which one is greater.

Ms. Patricia Ramirez stated the negotiation process is not a grievance process and grievance can be addressed at the Labor Management Meeting. She further explained that every member in good standing have an opportunity to be involved in their Local. She also informed the City Council she created the flyer they received from Mr. Henry Wilhite which is only a flyer to highlight important matters in the contract. She further noted that there was minimum participation for union meetings.

Mrs. Dawson wanted to know how the union members were informed on when to vote.

Ms. Patricia Ramirez said they informed union members by putting up flyers around their workplace and they posted on the union website. She noted she was told flyers were being taken down by some employees as soon as they were posted.

Ms. Woods wanted to know did the union consider mailing the information out to the members.

Ms. Ramirez stated there is not enough money in the Local for mailing expenses and they must operate in the guidelines that is afforded to them.

Ms. Woods wanted to know why nonmembers can vote in negotiations.

Ms. Ramirez said yes, Louisiana is a right-to-work state, but nonmembers can't vote for union officers.

Mr. Marshall wanted to know more information on the grievance process in the Union and if it is done anonymously.

Mrs. Sturdivant noted that issues with leadership are brought to her and if it is not resolved then they go through the grievance process.

Ms. Ramirez said the Union has an open-door policy and 24-hour operations for grievance in the workplace.

Ms. Woods noted concerns that it's fifty percent of employees that are not okay with the contract.

Ms. Ramirez stated an opportunity to participate in the vote was extended to all non-members and members.

Mrs. Sturdivant noted if there is an article, in any contract that needs to be reopened, they can agree to revisit. She further noted the contract goes into effect as soon as it is approved.

Mrs. Rowell stated this contract doesn't stop future raises.

Mr. Robert Johnson came forward to apologize to the Mayor and City Council members for the disrespect. He also noted he was only asking to table the contract.

Mrs. Sturdivant noted to revisit the terms of the contract it will start the whole process over.

Mr. Henry Wilhite stated this was a democratic vote and the demotion of disciplinary is what he negotiated for.

Mr. Harvey noted for clarification the voluntary demotion in lieu of termination is explained in Section 7 of the contract.

Mr. Anthony Garland, Transit Union, wanted to know if the vote today takes care of the City workers including transit system.

Mrs. Sturdivant said she emailed Mr. Garland on Friday about transit pay raise and she is currently working on the transit worker's contract.

Seeing no one else come forward the Hearing was declared closed.

(e) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack, seconded by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved an Ordinance No.12,112 adopting a Budget of Revenues and providing for an estimate of items and expenditures for the fiscal year 2022-2023. (Admin.) (There were no public comments.)

(Mr. Harvey left the meeting at 8:12pm and returned at 8:13pm.)

(f) Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved an Ordinance No. 12,113 adopting a Capital Improvements Program for the City of Monroe and providing for a detailed statement of the contents for a five (5) year period from May 1, 2022 to April 30, 2027. (Admin.) (There were no comments.)

CITIZENS PARTICIPATION:

Ms. Melissa Byers, 1007 Orange Street, wanted to thank the Mayor and City Council for approving the wage increases for the City employees. Ms. Byers stated she lives in District (4) and wanted to address the current gun violence. She suggested a full investigation on where the firearms are coming from and believes firearms are coming from an outside source. She further suggested community policing could be a solution to the community crime rate and having a better relationship with the citizens and police.

Stanley Smalls, Transit Union representative, wanted to address member concerns of union members not being heard by leadership and the City Council. He noted many members are tired and are on the verge of quitting. He further stated in his opinion without workers there is no Monroe City Transit.

Mr. Anthony Garland, Transit Union representative, wanted to address the Mayor to ask him to reconsider the application of the Temp Service in the City of Monroe. He stated there are temp workers who can't get a full-time position because of the temp service guidelines.

Mr. Verbon Muhammad wanted to address the current gun violence in the City and echoed the Council's prior comments. Mr. Muhammad wanted to speak on behalf of the judges because they have concerns about the statements made by the Mayor. He addressed his concerns about Judges of the 4th Judicial District being blamed for the violence and Judge Larry Jefferson being directly blamed as if he is the problem. He asked if the Mayor and his Administration have a solution for the gun violence. On another note, he stated in his opinion officers should write better police reports because reports are used as evidence in court, but they are not accurate.

(Mrs. Dawson left the meeting at 8:26pm and returned at 8:28pm.)

Mr. Trey Gingles, citizen of Monroe, stated in his opinion that guns are not the problem but the people with the intent to do harm to others. He suggested the City reform the adults doing the crime and he is willing to mentor any youth in the City because change begins with us. He also mentioned that the government works for the citizens of the City and if people feel judges are the problem remove them from that position.

There being no further business to come before the council, the meeting was adjourned at 8:31p.m., upon motion of Mr. Harvey and it was seconded by Mrs. Dawson.

Carday Marshall, Sr.
Chairman

Carolus S. Riley
Council Clerk

Ileana Murray
Staff Secretary

For extended details on the council meeting please call the Council Clerk Monday-Friday at 318-329-2252 to schedule an appointment to listen to the minute recording.

