

City Hall, Monroe, Louisiana  
December 27, 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 Chairman Kema Dawson, called the meeting to order. She then asked the clerk to call roll.

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

There was absent: None

Chairman Dawson announced that a quorum was present, and that the Invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance would be led by Mayor Ellis or his designee.

The Invocation was led by Pastor Tammy Hopkins of Bread of Life Christian Ministries.

COMMUNICATIONS & SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Mr. Harvey welcomed everyone, and he wished everyone a Happy New Year.

Mrs. Ezernack said good evening and she thanked everyone for spending their evening with the Council. She wished everyone a Happy New Year.

Ms. Wood said Seasons Greetings to all, and she is thankful to see everyone here. She said she is thankful for a really productive 2022 and she is looking forward to a prosperous and healthy New Year. She said she is looking forward to some great things happening in the City of Monroe in 2023. She noted one thing she is looking to revisit in 2023 is "No Dark Spaces in District 3" by tying a yellow ribbon around all of the light poles that are out. She further noted the yellow ribbon will serve as a signature that the lights are out, and Entergy will be contacted for those lights to be replaced. She said she wants to take the opportunity to invite everyone here and the people listening to the Celebration of Kwanzaa. She stated Kwanzaa is a secular festive festival that is observed by many African Americans as they celebrate their culture, heritage, and traditional values. She further stated the celebration takes place from December 26<sup>th</sup> through January 1<sup>st</sup> and there will be daily Kwanzaa celebrations starting at 6pm at the Muhammad Mosque 99 located at 418 Winnsboro Road Monroe, La. She said there will be live drums, dancers, and artifacts which is an amazing implication as it pertains to this historic celebration.

Mr. Marshall said Seasons Greetings to everyone, and he hopes everyone had a blessed Christmas and he is looking forward to a blessed New Year as well. He thanked everyone for their prayers and concerns, and he stated the homegoing for his sister was beautiful. He expressed his apologies to Mrs. Ezernack, and he said there were some things said at the last meeting that shouldn't have been said. He stated Mrs. Ezernack was disrespected and no matter what disagreements people have there is a level of respect people should carry in every situation. He further stated on behalf of the Southside Economic Development District and NAACP he is personally apologizing to Mrs. Ezernack. He said she has help them more than anyone he could think of regardless of what the people see or don't see. He noted there is a spirit of division and confusion that hovers around especially with this situation the Council has been dealing with lately. He said all the councilmembers labored with this process and regardless of the decision that was made, they used the resources that were provided to them. He said he doesn't want anyone to think the councilmembers were against the map and whatever was put in the paper wasn't true. He noted what he wanted to do personally was give them time to review some things, but the Council had a timeline. He said something could have been adjusted but they don't know, and the City has to move forward. He said he can't accept that level of disrespect and he will not let it go unnoticed.

Mrs. Dawson wished everyone Happy Holidays and she is happy to see everyone on the last Tuesday of this year moving into 2023. She echoed Mr. Marshall's comments, and she stated going forward into 2023 it is her prayer that the negatively that the City has seen in 2022 in Council meetings, in the media, Facebook live post, the pettiness, and bitterness will stop. She said we recently celebrated the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and Jesus is love. She further

stated we need to start spreading love in the City of Monroe and not division. She noted everyone is saying OneRoe but it has to stop with the bickering and racism. She further noted it has to start by showing a spirit of unity and not division. She said it is her prayer all the different agencies and business come together on one accord, a City that is not divided by North, South, East, West or by black and white. She said we talk about unity and inclusion lets also be about it. She said let's be a City where all diversity and all walks of life are accepted. She said let us be about love and that is what she wants to walk into for 2023.

Mayor Friday Ellis stated he was not here at the last Council meeting, but he wanted to highlight a few things that have been productive over the last few weeks. Mayor Ellis stated on his trip to DC with the University they talked to our delegation about joint projects that surround disaster preparedness and how they can work together to help North Louisiana when a storm hits. He said people move North to gain shelter and the City of Monroe wants to be better prepared because when they are in our City they are our citizens. He noted they met with other agencies such as the Economic Development Administration (EDA) and Department of Agriculture to talk about current and future funding sources. On another note, the Mayor stated the City cut the ribbon on multiple projects with the I-20 Development District and he thanked the I-20 Broad for moving these projects forward. He said something fun for the Holidays was the Christmas bike give away and he said it's always good to see the smiles on the kids' faces. He thanked all the businesses and the City employees that gave out of their own pockets to make this event possible for the children. He thanked the Monroe Police Department and Monroe Fire Department for their time spent with the children during "Shop with a Hero." He stated the winter weather response had 18 people at the City's warming station and he thanked all the employees that helped. He asked Mr. Sean Benton, Interim Public Works Director/Water System Manager, to come up to the podium to give the City an update on where we are with winter weather. He said they have received over 900 calls between water and sewer issues in the last couple of days. He said the crews were stretched but multiple people from the community reached out to express their thanks and gratitude. He personally thanked the Water Distribution, Water Treatment, Wastewater Collections, Wastewater Plant, Community Affairs, Monroe Police Department, and Monroe Fire Department.

Mr. Sean Benton said it is always an honor to talk about what good the Public Works Department is doing in the City. He said he has heard positive and negative stuff but at the end day the City has a great water system as a whole. He said if people look around at other cities within our region the amount of boil advisories, no water, and things of that nature this is the second opportunity they have to show what has been done over the pass years. He thanked the City Council for supporting a lot of projects and the Administration who have helped to find a lot of funding to make the system resilient. He said he has talked to several cities dealing with water systems within the State of Louisiana that are going through the same issues they went through the last storm such as no water pressure, boil advisory, no water for businesses, or water for fire protection. He stated the citizens of Monroe have also played a big part in embracing the water rate increase and paying the water rates for that money to be put back into the system as a whole. He further stated that has self-established the City to be sustainable to grow businesses and quality life for a long time. He said everyone should download the "Eye on Water" app that lets residents know if they have any leaks at their home. He said they were able to identify about 500 leaks at one time at rental properties where people weren't living at the location. He said the Water Treatment plant project is going really well and the first wastewater treatment train will be running probably in the next 6 or 7 months. He said the whole project said should be done in the next 13 or 14 months and it's something that will last overall.

Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mr. Marshall the minutes of the Legal and Regular Session of December 13, 2022, and the minutes of the Legal and Special Session of December 14,2022, were unanimously approved. (There were no public comments.)

#### RESOLUTIONS AND MINUTE ENTRIES:

##### Council:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Marshall seconded, by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8412 granting an exception to the Open Container Ordinance to the Twin City Art Foundation for a Public Reception for the Sutton Collection Exhibition at the Masur Museum of Art) pursuant to Monroe City Code Sec. 12-231 D. (Open Ordinance), and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

(b) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack seconded, by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8413 granting an exception to the Open Container Ordinance to the Twin City Art Foundation for a Public Reception for the Loren Schwerd Exhibition at the Masur Museum of Art) pursuant to Monroe City Code Sec. 12-231 D. (Open Container Ordinance), and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

(c) Upon motion of Ms. Woods seconded, by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8414 granting an exception to the Open Container Ordinance to the Twin Cities Krewe of Janus (Mardi Gras Parade) pursuant to Monroe City Code Sec. 12-231 D. (Open Container Ordinance), and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Department of Administration:

(a) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack seconded, by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved to consider five (5) Renewal Applications for a New 2023 Class A Alcoholic Beverage Permit. The Monroe Police Department has no disqualifying records and Sales Tax has been approved. (There were no public comments.)

(b) Upon motion of Ms. Woods seconded, by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved to consider two (2) Renewal Applications for a New 2023 Class B Alcoholic Beverage Permit. The Monroe Police Department has no disqualifying records and Sales Tax has been approved. (There were no public comments.)

(c) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey seconded, by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to consider one (1) Renewal Applications for a New 2023 Class C Alcoholic Beverage Permit. The Monroe Police Department has no disqualifying records and Sales Tax has been approved. (There were no public comments.)

(d) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey seconded, by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to consider one (1) Renewal Applications for a New 2023 Class E Alcoholic Beverage Permit. The Monroe Police Department has no disqualifying records and Sales Tax has been approved. (There were no public comments.)

Department of Public Works:

(a) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack seconded, by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved to consider a request from the Public Works, Street Division for authorization from the City Council to advertise for bids for a 2023 Spartan Leaf Pro Plus. Funding for this item will come from the Street Division Capital Account. (There were no public comments.)

(b) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack seconded, by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8415 authorizing a designated city representative to enter into a Professional Services Agreement with R2 Rentals for Supplemental Residential Garbage Collection and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Ms. Woods stated she spoke to Mr. Benton about this item, and she thinks this is something great he is doing. She further stated she would get numerous calls about collection and to look at bringing something else in place to make sure there are timely pickups.

Mr. Harvey echoed Ms. Woods comments and congratulated Mr. Benton on another winter with no boil advisory.

Police Department:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey seconded, by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8416 authorizing a designated city representative to accept and execute an Agreement with the Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement to accept funding in the amount of \$37,758.00 for the Dare Program and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Engineering Services:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey seconded, by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8417 authorizing a designated city representative to execute Change Order No. One (1) for the Deborah Drive Cross Drains Replacement Project, between the City of Monroe and CW&W Contractors, Inc. for an additional thirty calendar days due to weather and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

(b) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack seconded, by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8418 authorizing an authorized city representative, to execute Change Order No. Eight (8) for the Water Treatment Plant Renovation and Expansion, between the City of Monroe and Max Foote Construction Company for an increase in the contract amount by \$41,866.15 and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

(c) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack seconded, by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8419 authorizing a designated city representative to enter into an Agreement for Professional Services with Allied Engineering Design, to provide Engineering and Design Services for various HVAC Systems in the City of Monroe. (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 come forward the Hearing was closed.

(a) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved an Ordinance No. 12,145 authorizing the City of Monroe to take corporeal possession of the property described below and sell to Kimareanna L. Ross all rights, title, and interest that the City may have acquired to the east/2 of lot in Lot 11 and west/2 of lot in Lot 11, Stubbs Young Bayou Addition. Beg 251.11 ft north of se corner said lot and fronting 40 ft on east line of said square, depth 107,475 ft, Ouachita Parish, (no situs) S 21<sup>st</sup>, District 3, Monroe, La by adjudication at Tax Sale dated June 12, 2017, and further with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

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

(b) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved an Ordinance No. 12,146 authorizing adopting Mayor Friday Ellis to sign all documents in connection with the acquisition of properties related to State Project No. H007300 Highway: Kansas Lane – Garrett Road Connector & I-20 Improvements Route: La 594 Ouachita Parish and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

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

(c) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved an Ordinance No. 12,147 adopting a Reapportionment Plan for Monroe City Council Districts in accordance with the 2020 Census of Population and Appropriate Federal and State Laws and Section 2-02 of the House Rule Charter of the City of Monroe and further providing with respect thereto. (Ms. Woods nay) (There were no public comments.)

Citizen's Participation:

(1.) Mr. Gene Payne, 1705 Reed Street, stated on October 25, 2022, there was a Resolution for the Monroe Transit to submit an application for projects from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). He said he asked management what were the projects but he didn't receive an appropriate answer which was a red flag for him. He said he is questioning why the City Council wasn't also questioning the projects when management only mentioned purchasing a piece of equipment which is not a project. He said he wants to know what are the projects and he hasn't gotten a specific answer from anyone. He said the manager said the projects are a piece of equipment which is one bus to be purchased with the funds. He said there are two major grants at Transit rolling stop and operational grants coming from the FTA but rolling stop has nothing to do with projects. He said he needs to know what are the projects the money from the FTA is going to because the only answer he received was a piece of equipment being purchased.

Mr. Harvey stated the granting authority in this scenario will treat the purchase of the equipment as a project. He said we can get as far as the language of what one should be or not, but ultimately the City will have a list of projects more than the money that will come to the City. He said based on the grants the City receives depends on the funding the City will get back and they submit a list of eligible projects, some may be for purchase of equipment. He said the City requested money for projects or equipment but that is the request.

There being no further business to come before the council, the meeting was adjourned at 6:31 p.m., upon motion of Mr. Harvey and it was seconded by Ms. Woods.

Mrs. Kema Dawson  
Chairman

Carolus S. Riley  
Council Clerk

Ileana Murray  
Staff Secretary