

Monroe City Council Legal and Regular Session
February 11, 2020
6:00 p.m.
City Council Chambers-City Hall
MINUTES

There was a legal and regular session of the City Council of the City of Monroe, Louisiana held this date, February 11, 2020 at the Council's regular meeting place, 400 Lea Joyner Memorial Expressway, City Council Chambers/City Hall Building, Monroe, Louisiana.

The Honorable Juanita G. Woods, Chairwoman, called the meeting to order.

Ms. Woods welcomed each one present tonight; she acknowledged and welcomed Mr. Doug Harvey to the Council and also acknowledged his wife who was sitting in the audience; she acknowledged Interim MPD Chief Reggie Brown and MPD staff; she asked prayers for Attorney Louis Scott during his illness.

The roll call was done by the Council Clerk, Ms. Riley.

Council members present for roll call: Mrs. Gretchen Ezernack, Ms. Juanita Woods, Mr. Douglas Harvey, Mr. Kenneth Wilson.

Chairwoman Woods declared a quorum.

Mr. Eddie Clark arrived after roll call at 6:14 p.m.

Council members absent: None.

The Invocation and Prayer were led by Mayor Mayo.

COMMUNICATIONS & SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Mr. Harvey welcomed each one and thanked them for the opportunity to serve; he said being new and getting up to speed fast, that he will be asking a lot of questions as he learn his way around; he congratulated the Krewe Rivière parade for their first parade this past weekend; he commented that he looks forward to the State of the City address on February 13th; he congratulated the State leaders on their recent appointments and look forward to their support of our area in this upcoming session.

2. Mrs. Ezernack welcomed each one present; she welcomed Mr. Harvey and look forward to him serving and working with him. She congratulated Chief Brown on his appointment and all that he has done when called upon; she thanked the MPD officers in attendance for all that they do for our community.

3. Mr. Wilson welcomed Mr. Harvey; he acknowledged the passing of former interim Councilmember John Smith and asked prayers for his family. He thanked public works for all of their work. He thanked the students who lived in the area of South 4th for their cleaning up in the area. He congratulated Chief Reggie Brown and the police department staff and wished everyone a Happy Valentine's day.

4. Mayor Mayo welcomed Mr. Harvey and commented that they had a very good meeting today in his office; he said he would be glad to assist with any questions that he may have and to be of assistance to him. He acknowledged the passing of Mr. John Smith, an interim Council member, a long time educator. He acknowledged his appointment of MPD Interim Chief Reggie Brown and MPD police officers. He announced the State of the City address to be held on February 13, 2020.

5. Ms. Woods asked that citizens remember to shop and eat in Monroe.

Upon a motion of Mr. Wilson and a second by Mrs. Ezernack, the minutes of the Legal and Regular session of January 28, 2020 were unanimously approved. (There were no public comments).

PRESENTATION: NONE.

PUBLIC HEARINGS: NONE.

PROPOSED CONDEMNATIONS: Public Comment:

1. 809 South Third Street (D4) (Owner-James Tyrone Johnson)) Upon a motion by Mr. Wilson, second by Mr. Clark and unanimously approved for property owner to be given 60 days or April 11, 2020, in which to bring the structure into compliance with the code or demolish the structure and clean the lot.

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Comments: Ms. Robinson presented pictorial evidence and explained the conditions of the structure; proper service was made from their office.

Mr. James Johnson stated he wanted to demolish and or save the structure. Mrs. Robinson said a licensed contractor would need to be hired to determine mold, etc. Mr. Wilson stated there were two properties down that were worse than this property and a caller informed him of the house next door had rodents.

ACCEPTANCE OR REJECTION OF BIDS: Public Comment

(a) Upon a motion by Mr. Wilson, second by Mr. Clark and unanimously approved to Accept the bid of Aardvard Tactical for Tactical Deployable Electronic Equipment for the Monroe Police Department Ref# 2020-00000033 as recommended by the Director of Administration as meeting the specifications of this bid. The Vendor meets the specifications of this bid and funds will be derived from the fire insurance money, Capital and Supply Account. The Tax and Revenue Division has confirmed that these bidders are tax compliant. (There were no public comments).

Comments: MPD Chief Reggie Brown stated this equipment was lost during the fire several years ago and this replaces that equipment. He explained the operation of the equipment.

(b) Upon a motion by Mr. Wilson, second by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved to Accept the bid of Aardvard Tactical for a Tactical Robot for the Monroe Police Department Ref# 2020-00000034 as recommended by the Director of Administration as meeting the specifications of this bid. The Vendor meets the specifications of this bid and funds will be derived from the fire insurance money, Capital and Supply Account. The Tax and Revenue Division has confirmed that these bidders are tax compliant. (There were no public comments).

Comments: Mr. Harvey stated the previous agenda item had two bids received back and on this agenda item, only one was received back; he asked if this item was specialized as it being the reason for having received only one bid back; Chief Reggie Brown said to his understanding the bids are in compliance with the normal bidding process and it did meet the bidding requirements. Mrs. Ezernack said bids were sent out and only one responded.

RESOLUTIONS AND MINUTE ENTRIES:

Council: Public Comment: None.

Department of Administration: Public Comment: None.

Department of Planning & Urban Development: Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Mr. Clark and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7650, authorizing James E. Mayo, Mayor to enter into and execute Change Order #2 by and between the City of Monroe and Bright Construction, LLC. in the amount of \$42,000,00 from the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) B-17-MC-22-0005-E-412 and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments).

Mr. Harvey commented with this being a second change order and asked for the scope of the work being done and status. Ms. Downs said they were waiting, and the house has been taken down to the studs and is down to the frame, waiting on approval from Council to rebuild and reconstruct the home; Mr. Harvey asked what the first change order was for; Ms. Downs said it was for the removal of mold from the home, tear out everything and take the house down to the studs; Mr. Harvey asked for the total investment of the property and Ms. Downs said it was approximately \$95,000; he asked at what point do the city stop spending on a project like this when it exceeds the value of the home; Ms. Downs said the issue was unforeseen due to the mold in this house and in the future they will demolish and start over as a reconstruct from foundation up. Mrs. Ellen Hill, PUD Director said with federal dollars, once you touch the home, they are obligated to make it whole again and when the mold was discovered, they had a service come in and recommend that they had to take the home down to the frame and start over; the citizen is 85 years old, they couldn't let him move back in and they touched the home and promised that they would rehab the home; she said moving forward they would be changing the way that they evaluate properties and hopefully not be in this situation again. It has not happened like this in the last ten years and they didn't realize

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the extent of the damage. Ms. Woods asked them how would they determine moving forward and an 85 year old needing this service; Mrs. Hill said they would have evaluated how to do it in a more efficient manner and would not have started the job and rolled into the next change order and explained there would not have been a change order, it would have been a total rehab, minor and major, draw the line to not have a situation like this, but to address the homeowners needs; Mr. Harvey asked how would they prevent themselves in the future from getting into a liability like this, even with minor repairs, and in the discovery process of finding mold. Ms. Downs said if the mold is disturbed, then it has to be addressed for safety issues, its unforeseen. Mrs. Hill said if the house is built prior to 1978, it may have latex and with the issue of mold, it depends and asking questions about the prior condition of the house on whether it flooded and or the repairs that have been made. Ms. Hill said they would have a better plan on how to address the housing needs efficiently.

(b) Upon a motion by Mr. Clark, second by Mr. Wilson and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7651, authorizing James E. Mayo, Mayor to enter into and execute Change Order #1 by and between the City of Monroe and Wilson Enterprise in the amount of \$7,795.00 from the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) B-17-MC-22-0005-E-427 and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments).

Legal Department: Public Comment: None.

Mayor's Office: Public Comment: None.

Department of Public Works: Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Mr. Wilson, second by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7652, approving the Sublease of property currently being leased to Corks LLC at the Monroe Regional Airport to Daveair LLC and further providing with respect thereto.

Comments: Mr. Dave McGee, owner of Daveair LLC doing business as Hangar 7 air center at Monroe Airport commented that he was present to answer any questions.

(b) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Mr. Wilson and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7653, authorizing Mayor James E. Mayo to enter into a Professional Services Agreement with Utility Metering Solutions for Consultation on Upgrading the City of Monroe's Water Meter Program and further providing with respect thereto.

Comments: Mr. Sean Benton explained the need for the consultant for the software for the utility water meters. The city has been using the first generation of smart meters and technology since has changed and there is now a need to upgrade the system to move forward. The consultant would assist the city in selecting the right vendor. The initial project was a \$6.5 million project and do not want to do a complete changing out of meters, but to do retrofitting and replacing of infrastructure, this will save money over time. The city's current system meters are read by a tower to come back to the system and the new system is based on the cloud based network. This agreement includes task two that will look at the commercial meters to make sure they are being read accurately, because the commercial meters make up 30 percent of the city's revenue. It will also allow the citizens to be able to look at their meter readings in real time on a phone app, a great transparency. Mrs. Ezernack said they are approving task one this evening; Mr. Benton said what's being approved are task one, the evaluation of the pathway to lead to the next level and task two, the visiting of the commercial meters and the 5/8 residential meters will be pulled because there were complaints to see testing on them for accuracy, but is confident they are reading pretty accurate. The company that specializes in this will give the city more assurance and this company has been highly recommended through the state of Louisiana, having done projects throughout Louisiana as well as West Monroe, that has the new generation and this is the one that Monroe is trying to move to at this point. Mr. Wilson asked for the life span time of the batteries on the meters; Mr. Benton said about fifteen years and they have been in service since 2009 when they were replaced, with about another seven years of battery life remaining; Mr. Harvey asked if meters were purchased would they come through this same group that's doing the evaluation of that phase; Mr. Benton said not necessarily it would need to come back before Council for approval before moving to next step; Mr. Harvey said he has been getting feedback for the past 5-6 months that constituents are getting double and triple meter readings; he asked if this was indicative to be a part of the problem. Mr. Benton said it wasn't, but it was more of a check and balance of the situation, and with moving to the smart meters will be getting away from the old tradition of drive by and reading the meters and it gives the customer more assurance that the meter readings are accurate and correct. Mr. Harvey asked how effective communication to the constituents could be made because there will be some concern when they see the meters are being worked on; Mr. Benton said it goes back to a lot of educating the public about information and their usage. The contract amount is \$69,000 and will come from the water capital fund; Ms. Woods asked if task three would be the downloading

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of the app to the phone and Mr. Benton said it would be task three. Mrs. Ezernack asked for the time frame and Mr. Benton said it would be three months. Mayor Mayo said it was part of the smart city initiative, Monroe Smart and will talk more about it during the state of the city address on Wednesday.

Ms. Marie Brown, citizen, asked if the new meters that are now old meters being replaced with newer meters; Mr. Benton said no, they are looking at replacing the software to read the meters; he said a few of the meters would not be able to retrofit and are looking at the best avenue for them to be retrofit or replaced for a small number of meters, but are not doing a meter replacement, but a software replacement. Ms. Brown asked if the meters came with an upgraded plan; he said originally, seven or eight years ago, they bought a system that goes with it called Galaxy and Galaxy is no longer supported with Windows 10. Ms. Brown asked what would happen down the road, 8 years when technology changes and the city is spending money to upgrade on that which has already been purchased. Mr. Benton said anything with 20 years, the life of the meter is too long and will probably be back in 7-8 years again replacing every meter in the city and this is the only way to have an accurate reading; the meters are not made to run forever. Ms. Brown asked if this all would help with the sewer bill since there are no sewer meters; he said the sewer rates are based on the usage of water and this is the industry standard. Chairwoman Woods said it was time to move on due to Ms. Brown now speaking about sewer; Ms. Brown said it was important because the sewer was regulated by the water and would explain why the sewer bills are so high. Ms. Rowell said during 2009, the technology they chose was the tower and they were doing manual reads, individuals going out and reading every single meter and at the time, this was the cutting edge technology and another option was drive by; the city chose the tower reads which eliminated excess man power by using the tower reads as opposed to the drive by and no one could foresee eleven years ago the technology that's being proposed now, the new industry standard, the cellular; Then the city was on cutting edge technology in 2009 the meters are still functional and do have a longer life, than the 8-10 years being looked at, but the technology that drives them and gives the information is what's being outdated and want to provide the real time information; a lot of the complaints received are about usage and people don't realize how much they are using when they are watering, have company and or have leaks; it's easy to show from the office to show usage.

Department of Community Affairs: Public Comment: None.

Police Department: Public Comment: None.

Fire Department: Public Comment: NONE.

Engineering Services: Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Mr. Clark, second by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7654, authorizing the Purchasing Manager to advertise for bids on the Bayou Pump Station Access Facility Project. The estimated cost of this project is \$242,000.00. The DBE Goal is 7.95% and source of funds Water Capital Funds. (There were no public comments).

(b) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7655, authorizing the Purchasing Manager to advertise for bids on the Calypso Street Waterline Rupture Repairs Project. The estimated cost of this project is \$242,619.63. The DBE Goal is 9.95% and source of funds Water Capital Funds. (There were no public comments).

BREAK IF NEEDED:

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS & ORDINANCES: Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Mr. Harvey, second by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance approving the Restatement of a Commercial Lease Agreement confirming multiple modifications and supplemental terms at the Monroe Regional Airport by and between the City of Monroe and Daveair, L.L.C. and, further providing with respect thereto. (Airport) (There were no public comments).

RESOLUTIONS AND ORDINANCES FOR SECOND READING AND FINAL ADOPTION AND SUBJECT TO PUBLIC HEARING: Open Public Hearing/Public Comment/Close Hearing:
NONE.

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CITIZEN'S PARTICIPATION

1. Mr. Tyrone Dickens, citizen, commented to Mr. Harvey that he wasn't coming for him yet, he hasn't done anything he's good; he said he has been reading a lot of stuff and it's starting again in 2020 and there is a lot of election stuff going on; he said they are coming up to somebody's throat and getting up here knowing that it's being televised; he said he would recommend whatever is going on from now on just like they do in West; he said she have a right to ask questions, just ask your question and be done; he said he is recommending to the Chairman to vote on it from now on because it is making Monroe look real bad and every time we get up, we have to argue and fuss with each other; he said one thing everybody know about him is that he stay ready for smoke, his past has been out and if any one has any thing to say to K-9, he is man enough and big enough to tote his weight; he said remember first, that you heard it first from him, she drew first blood and now it's his time.

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 6:56 p.m., upon a motion of Mr. Clark and seconded by Mr. Wilson. (There were no public comments).

Ms. Juanita G. Woods
Council Chairwoman

Ms. Carolus S. Riley
Council Clerk

Ms. Jacqueline Benjamin
Council Secretary

***For extended details on the Council meeting please call the Council Clerk, Monday-Friday at 329-2252; also, a recording of the minutes can be sent via email to you.**