

City Hall, Monroe, Louisiana  
February 14, 2023  
6:00p.m.

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, & 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 Ms. Woods or her designee.

The Invocation was led by Minister Verbon Muhammad.

Communications & Special Announcements:

Mr. Harvey wished everyone a Happy Valentine's Day.

Mrs. Ezernack wished everyone a Happy Valentine's Day as well.

Ms. Woods said good evening and it is good to see everyone here at the Council meeting. She said she knows everyone thinks she has a long list of things to say but for the sake of time and because it is Valentine's Day, she wished everyone a Happy Valentine's Day as well.

Mr. Marshall said Happy Love Day and he hopes everyone had a wonderful spirit of love in their relationships and individually. He thanked everyone for coming out to the Council meeting and listening to the concerns of the City.

Mrs. Dawson stated the Monroe City Council Department has decided to recognize a small business in each district once a month. She said on tonight District 5's small business of the month is Smith Funeral Home, owner Simon and Stephanie Smith, 907 Winnsboro Road. She asked if anyone was present on behalf of Smith Funeral Home to accept the award but seeing no one come forward Mrs. Dawson acknowledged Smith Funeral Home with an applause. She further stated Districts 3 and 4 will also present their small business of the month.

Ms. Woods stated she wasn't aware the Council would be presenting the awards at this time, and she thought they were doing the presentation at another time. She noted the business award is an initiative that will happen once a month to a business in each of the Councilmember's communities. She said District 3's small business of the month is Jordan's Automotives, Owner Robert Jordan, 111 North Stanley Avenue.

Mr. Marshall stated District 4's small business of the month is Big Momma's Fine Foods, owner Dorothy Gilbert, 1118 South 2<sup>nd</sup> Street which is a favorite in the area. He said if you haven't tried it, you are missing out and he asked if anyone was present to represent Big Momma's Fine Foods but seeing no one come forward he thanked them for all their years of service.

Mrs. Dawson had further comments that she had the privilege of traveling to Lafayette, LA to watch the Neville High School Bengal Bells at their dance competition. She presented them with a proclamation from the City of Monroe and the Mayor to proclaim the Neville High School Bengal Bells are a team of extraordinary athletes with great abilities who worked hard to participate and succeed at the Louisiana State Dance Team Competition. She further stated in Division 2 category the Bengal Bells dance team won first place in the kick competition, first place in hip-hop, and third place in the pom routine. She said in the overall competition they received third place in hip-hop, fifth place in the pom routine, and they were rewarded the overall Louisiana State Championship in high kick. She said the first, third, and fifth place accomplishment as well as the overall championship victory was recognized not only by the dedication and strategy of Coach Jessica Smith but also the Bengals Bell hard work and excellence as a team. She said Coach Jessica Smith has earned a total of 13 State Championships and she received the Covenant Louisiana State Dance Director of the year in 2011. She stated on behalf of Mayor Friday Ellis, the Monroe City Council, and the citizens of Monroe they commend the Neville High School Bengal Bells for their achievements at the Louisiana State Dance competition and proclaim today February 14, 2023, as Neville High School Bengal Bells Day.

She wished everyone a Happy Valentine's Day and she said the Council appreciates everyone for coming out to the Council meeting.

Mayor Friday Ellis had no announcements at this time.

Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack, seconded by Mr. Marshall the minutes of the Legal and Regular Session of January 23, 2023, were unanimously approved. Mr. Harvey and Mrs. Dawson abstain they were not present at the last meeting. (There were no public comments.)

Proposed Condemnations:

The following condemnation was considered:

1. (1302 Sherrouse (D3) (Owner –Gene Harris) Notice to show cause was served. Photographic evidence was presented. Upon motion of Ms. Woods, seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved, the building was condemned, and the property owner given 30 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 unsafe dilapidated structure, and it was presented in Environmental Court December 2022. They are asking that the property be condemned, and owner given 30 days.

Ms. Woods wanted to know if the owners are present to talk to the City Council. She said she wanted Ms. Harris to come on tonight because the property has been labeled a nuisance in the community and she wanted to know what her plans are for the property.

Mrs. Sandra Harris, 1302 Sherrouse Street, stated she has been having trouble trying to find someone to demolish the property and she just needs a little more time. She said if not, she would like to see if the City can demolish the property for her if she can't find anyone.

Ms. Woods wanted to know if 30 days was enough time to find someone to tear it down.

Mrs. Harris said yes, that is enough time.

Ms. Woods motion to condemn the property giving the owner 30 days to rid the property of all debris and noxious growth. She stated the City will not be out there in 30 days to tear the property down, but 30 days is what they are starting with.

ACCEPTANCE OR REJECTION OF BIDS:

(a) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8438 accepting the base bid of Lenco Industries, Inc., in the amount of \$369,896.00 for the Tactical Armored Security Vehicle, and further authorizing an authorized city representative, to enter into and execute a contract for said work. (There were no public comments.)

(b) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8439 accepting the base bid of Bonnell Industries Inc. in the amount of \$124,845.00, for the Leaf Vacuum, and further authorizing an authorized city representative, to enter into and execute a contract for said work. (There were no public comments.)

(c) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8440 accepting the base bid of Keeling Company in the amount of \$174,484.19, for the Rain bird VFD Pump Station, and further authorizing an authorized city representative, to enter into and execute a contract for said work. (There were no public comments.)

RESOLUTIONS AND MINUTE ENTRIES:

Council

Mrs. Dawson stated the Council has been asked to Passover items (a) and (b) until the next Council meeting dated February 28, 2023.

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey seconded by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to remove item (a) pending litigation of a Resolution removing Karl Dhaliwal from the Board of Commissioners for the Southside Economic Development District and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments)

(b) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey seconded by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to remove item (b) pending litigation of a Resolution appointing \_\_\_\_\_ to the Board of Commissioners for the

Southside Economic Development District and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Mr. Harvey wanted to verify if item (b) needed to be removed separately.

Mrs. Dawson and Ms. Woods stated both items were removed together.

There was a misunderstanding in the Chair asking for a vote to Passover items (a) & (b) until the next City Council meeting but Councilman Harvey motioned to remove pending litigation; therefore, the items were removed, per the motion and second to remove.

Department of Administration:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved to consider four (4) 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. Harvey and unanimously approved to consider an Application by Eric A. Jones dba Yacht Bar & Lounge, 215 Powell Avenue, Monroe LA 71201 for a New 2023 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.)

(c) Upon motion of Ms. Woods seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved to consider an Application by Rosanna Williams dba Vibe Lounge, 705 DeSiard Street, Monroe LA 71203 for a New 2023 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.)

Ms. Woods congratulated the business owners of this new establishment, and she said the Council is looking forward to patronizing their business.

Mr. Marshall stated likewise.

Mrs. Dawson asked the owners to stand up to be recognized and thanked them for their contribution to the City.

Mr. Ivan Thomas, Owner of Vibe Lounge, stated Vibe Lounge is a new lounge downtown Monroe and they will serve food, good music, and they have a patio. He said they will be open for happy hour to accommodate businesses that are in the downtown area. He said this has been a dream for him and his wife for about 7 years and they are finally able to see it.

(d) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved to consider an Application by Bal Dahal dba Forsythe Travel Plaza, 2221 Forsythe Avenue, Monroe LA 71201 for a New 2023 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.)

Department of Planning & Urban Development:

(a) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8441 authorizing the City of Monroe to apply for additional grant funding through the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) "Lead Hazard and Control and Healthy Homes" Grant Program and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public.)

Add-on: Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved to add a Resolution to the agenda as item (b) authorizing Mayor Friday Ellis to enter into and execute a subaward agreement by and between the City of Monroe and the Louisiana Housing Corporation in the amount of \$1,559,007.19 for the Lead Hazard control grant program (LHCP), and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Ms. Woods wanted to know how does this item differ from the one the Council passed at the last Council meeting. She said the item on the last Council meeting agenda they were asking to do an application for it, and she wanted to know if this is the reward.

Ms. Ellen Hill, Director of Planning & Urban Development, said they were lucky enough for the Council to approve for them to submit a grant last fall, but she became ill and didn't get a chance to submit the application. She said they are asking for permission again because they opened up the competition again because they didn't receive enough applicants. She noted the application would be rewarded directly to the City of Monroe to serve citizens within the City, the grant wouldn't start until later this year. She said the add-on is a result of working with the Louisiana Housing Corporation and asking the City to take on the remaining funds in their grant. She further noted this is a way for them to serve up to 50 residents in the City of Monroe and hopefully in Ouachita Parish.

(b) Upon motion of Ms. Woods seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8442 authorizing Mayor Friday Ellis to enter into and execute a subaward agreement by and between the City of Monroe and the Louisiana Housing Corporation in the amount of \$1,559,007.19 for the Lead Hazard control grant program (LHCP), and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Mayor's Office:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8443 authorizing a designated city representative to accept a grant offer from the Cities for Financial Empowerment Fund 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. 8444 authorizing Mayor Friday Ellis to enter into a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement to seek grant funding under the Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Rail Program and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Ms. Woods noted this is important and we should talk about it.

Mr. Knox Ross, Chairman of the Southern Rail Commission, stated the Southern Rail Commission is a three-state compact between the states of Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi. He said there are six commissioners from each state appointed by the Governor of that state. He said they have been working probably 30 years on Amtrak service between the meridian and Dallas-Fort Worth crescent that runs from New Orleans to New York that would split to serve our cities across Mississippi and North Louisiana. He noted it would connect West with Dallas and Fort Worth because of the recent passage of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) Bill. They have a unique opportunity to move the service forward. He said the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Safety (DOTD) with the support of Mississippi DOTD has applied for a CRIRI grant (Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements Program) to do the planning and study of what has to be done across the I-20 Corridor. He said the award will probably come by the summer. He said they have been working with Mayor Friday Ellis, the Mayor of Shreveport, LA Tom Arceneaux, the Mayor of Ruston, LA Ronny Walker, and the Mayor of Vicksburg, MS Mr. George Flaggs Jr. for a 4-city grant proposal worth four and half billion dollars within the federal state program. He said they are modeling this after a very successful effort to help the cities of Gonzalez and Baton Rouge, LA put together to raise a grant to build station structures in those two cities. He said the other piece to this puzzle is the Canadian Pacific Kansas City Southern Merger and he said the Canadian Pacific is the number one carrier for Amtrak in the country. He stated they have a written agreement with Amtrak that within two years there will be a study on what has to be done with the idea of implementing service within two years of the closing of the merger which they believe will be in the next few months. He further stated this is a real opportunity and the rail commission, which is formed by congress, they have the authority to work with the City and represent the governors of their states. He said the development downtown is remarkable and this is exactly what the City needs to make that work.

Mayor Ellis said a few months ago the City brought in the Cervical Spine Research Society (CSRS) to help manage grants instead of letting our grant writing department be tapped out as far as our resources. He said we have a great team with the Southern Rail Commission and Transportation for America. He stated the unique thing about this is most of the train stations are located in their historic downtown area. He said people will spill out from the stations to be able to eat at restaurants and shop. He further stated it is connecting our universities from Grambling State University to the University of Louisiana at Monroe and even all the way to Mississippi. He said it has been a learning experience and he thanked the Southern Rail Commission for their dedication helping the City to move this project forward.

Mrs. Ezernack thanked Mr. Ross for his hard work, and she said personally she is very excited about the project. She said the City Council has learned a lot about this over the last several months as well. She said it will be a wonderful opportunity for our community to have that service once again as it did many years ago.

Mr. Brandon Creekbaum, Assistant City Attorney, noted for the Council that Ruston, LA and Vicksburg, MS have already formerly approved the agreement and it is pending approval in Shreveport, LA.

Department of Public Works:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8445 authorizing Mayor Friday Ellis to execute an Agreement with the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LA DOTD) for improvements at the Monroe Regional Airport and further providing with respect thereto.

Mr. Eugene Payne, 1705 Reed Street, wanted to know what is going on with this item.

Mr. Charles Butcher, Airport Director, said it is for a runway sweeper truck at the airport and bunker gear for the Monroe Fire Department. He said 90% of the grant the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) will pay and a 10% match that the State will pay.

Mr. Payne stated there is so much nontransparency in the City and he didn't know exactly what was going on with this item. He said he is concerned about Transit, and he would like to know what would be the involvement with the Transit System.

Mr. Harvey stated this has nothing to do with Transit and would bet the item Mr. Payne is referring to is next.

(b) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8446 adopting the City of Monroe/Monroe Transit System Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) and further providing with respect thereto.

Mr. Payne stated he has the same question from the previous item.

Mr. Marc Keenan, General Manager, said this is the Monroe Transit safety plan that they had since 2020 and it is mandated by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). He stated each year they have to come before the City Council to get it approved. He further stated the approval process includes any safety information throughout the year.

Mr. Payne wanted to know what kind of safety deals is he talking about.

Mr. Keenan said they are traveling along the streets picking up passengers and everything they do there is a safety piece of it. He said they have to make sure they are using safe practices to transport people safely. He said they have a safety committee and a route committee that meet monthly to talk about issues on the street or at the facility.

Mr. Payne asked Mr. Keenan to share with the public the people that are on the safety committee and what experience they have with safety.

Mr. Keenan said the committee is composed of employees working for the Monroe Transit System. He said without using names they have people that have been a part of the agency for many years.

Mr. Payne said he has traveled to many states in the country and the Monroe Transit System operators are the safest. He stated his concern is the new employees' experiences and those employees that have left and how that affects the safety of the Monroe Transit System.

Mr. Keenan said he agrees that the Monroe Transit System have the safest operators not only in the State but most of the United States. He said he also agrees the younger employees that don't have the experience or don't have the safety traits can affect the safety of the Transit System, but they have training every month with each employee to make sure everyone is on the same line. He said he agrees because safety is the top of their concern and getting people where they need to go safely.

Mr. Payne said the Monroe Transit System have the most precious cargo to transport which is a human life. He wanted to know what is the protocol for training the younger employees and who will train them.

Mr. Keenan stated any employee that comes into the Monroe Transit System is trained by a certified trainer that is certified by the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA).

Mr. Payne wanted to know if that person is outside of the Monroe Transit System.

Mr. Keenan said the trainer on staff is a City of Monroe employee with the Monroe Transit System.

Ms. Woods noted this item was on the agenda last City Council meeting, but it was removed because something had to be done. She wanted to know what were those things and have they been addressed.

Mr. Keenan said one of the things was what the agency is doing to reduce the spread of germs because of covid but when he presented it before it was the wrong copy.

(c) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved to consider a request from the Monroe Regional Airport for authorization from the City Council to authorize a City representative to advertise for bids for the MLU Runway 14-32 Crack Seal. The Engineer's estimate is \$163,000.00. The DBE Goal is 0.42% and the source of funds is 100% funded by LaDOTD. (There were no public comments.)

Department of Community Affairs:

(a) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8447 authorizing a designated city representative to accept a Donation of nine (9) Schedule 40, 6" Metal Poles from Sol's Pipe & Steel, Inc., to be utilized at the Saul Adler Community Center by the City of Monroe, and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Mrs. Ezernack thanked Sol's Pipe & Steel for making this contribution to the City and to Saul Adler Community Center.

There being no objection from the Council and there were none, Mrs. Dawson asked the representative from Smith Funeral Home to come forward to receive the award for being the small business of month for District 5. Smith Funeral Home was not present at the beginning of the meeting when the Council gave out awards.

Police Department:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8448 authorizing Stacey Rowell, Director of Administration, to enter into an Amendment to the Contract for Services by and between the City of Monroe and the Ouachita Parish Sheriff's Office for Housing, Confinement and Detention Services and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Ms. Woods wanted to know the purpose of this item on the agenda.

Chief Victor Zordan, Chief of Police, stated the way they currently do it is a waste of time. He stated if you are arrested in the City you have to be booked in at the jail and wait to be transported to Ouachita Parish Correction Facility where they have to do the booking process again. He further stated they will be moving their location to OCC to cut down half the time it takes to book someone into jail.

Ms. Woods wanted to clarify that the people that are doing the booking will relocate to OCC and do the booking there.

Chief Zordan said yes, they have office space and there are a host of benefits to relocating.

(b) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8449 authorizing a designated city representative to execute a Support Amendment with Tyler Technologies, Inc. for Maintenance and Support Services for the Monroe Police Department's Law Enforcement record Management System and related systems. (There were no public comments.)

Fire Department:

(a) Upon motion of Ms. Woods seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8450 authorizing a designated city representative to execute a Support Amendment with Tyler Technologies, Inc. for Maintenance and Support Services for the Monroe Fire Department's Fire Records Management System and related systems. (There were no public comments.)

(b) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey seconded by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8451 authorizing a designated representative to apply for and accept an Assistance to Firefighters

Grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency on behalf of the Monroe Fire Department for funding to purchase self-contained breathing apparatus. (There were no public comments.)

Engineering Services:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8452 authorizing the City of Monroe to provide matching funds in the amount of \$2,850,000.00 for the young's Bayou Enhancement of Channel Capacity and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Ms. Woods wanted to know where the matching funds would come from.

Mr. Morgan McCallister, City Engineer, said matching funds will come from the Capital Infrastructure program.

(b) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8453 accepting as substantially complete work done by and between City of Monroe and CW&W Contractors, Inc. for Deborah Drive Cross Drains Replacement, and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

(c) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8454 accepting as substantially complete work done by and between City of Monroe and Lathan Construction, LLC and Change Order #3 (Close Out) for an increase in the contract price by an additional \$24,660.00 for the Forsythe Pool Demolition, and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

(d) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8455 accepting as substantially complete work done by and between City of Monroe and Murphy Bros. Trucking and Construction, LLC for Kansas Lane Drainage, and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

(e) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8456 authorizing a designated city representative to execute Change Order No. One (1) for the S Grand St: Orange St. – Standifer Avenue Project between the City of Monroe, Department of Transportation and Development and Diamond B. Construction Co., LLC for an additional \$28,721.60 and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

(f) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved to consider a request from the Monroe Engineering Department for authorization from the City Council to authorize a City representative to advertise for bids for the Benoit Community Center Parking Lot Improvements project. The engineer's estimate is \$754,626.00. The DBE Goal is 9.52% and the source of funds is CIC Funds.

(g) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved to consider a request from the Monroe Engineering Department for authorization from the City Council to authorize a City Representative to advertise for bids for the Saul Adler Parking Lot Improvements project. The Engineer's is \$262,800.00. The DBE Goal is 7.47% and the source of funds is CIC Funds. (There were no public comments.)

Mrs. Ezernack said thank you.

(h) Upon motion of Ms. Woods seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved to consider a request from the Monroe Engineering Department for authorization from the City Council to authorize a City Representative to advertise for bids for the Chennault Golf Cart Path Improvements project. The Engineer's is \$196,525.00. The DBE Goal is 12.60% and the source of funds is CIC Funds. (There were no public comments.)

Ms. Woods said she is super excited for the cart path improvements at the Chennault Golf Course.

Add-on: Upon motion of Mr. Harvey seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved to add a Resolution to the agenda as item (i) authorizing a designated city representative to advertise for bids on the WPCC – Equalization Basin Aeration System. The estimate cost of this project is \$750,000.00. (There were no public comments.)

(i) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8457 authorizing a designated city representative to advertise for bids on the WPCC – Equalization

Basin Aeration System. The estimate cost of this project is \$750,000.00. (There were no public comments.)

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS & ORDINANCES:

(a) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance authorizing a designated city representative to execute a Lease Amendment to the contract of lease by and between the City of Monroe and AvFlight Monroe Corporation and further providing with respect thereto. (Airport) (There were no public comments.)

(b) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance authorizing a designated city representative to execute a Consent to Assignment of Lease from Corks, LLC to AvFlight Monroe Corporation, and further providing with respect thereto. (Airport) (There were no public comments.)

Ms. Woods stated because she promised not to keep everyone all night, she is not asking any questions, but this is really good stuff for the airport. She further stated we will talk about this when it is finally time to adopt it.

(c) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance Amending Ordinance No. 11,264 which authorized a Lease between Delta Airlines, Inc and the City of Monroe/Monroe Regional Airport and further providing with respect thereto. (Airport) (There were no public comments.)

(d) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved to Introduce amending Ordinance No. 11,263 which authorized a Lease between American Airlines and City of Monroe/Monroe Regional Airport and further providing with respect thereto. (Airport) (There were no public comments.)

(e) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance authorizing Mayor Friday Ellis to enter into an option to Lease and License Agreement with Silicon Ranch Corporation for 223.06 acres of property located at the Monroe Regional Airport and further providing with respect thereto. (Mayor) (There were no public comments.)

(f) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance authorizing Mayor Friday Ellis to enter into a Purchase Option Agreement with Silicon Ranch Corporation for 306.3 acres of property located on Millhaven Road and further providing with respect thereto. (Mayor) (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 Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved an Ordinance No.12,148 authorizing Stacey Rowell, Director of Administration, to enter into and execute a lease by and between the City of Monroe to grant to Entergy Louisiana, LLC an overhead right of way for electrical utilities. (Legal)

CITIZENS PARTICIPATION:

(1) Mr. Rodney McFarland I, 1017 Ouachita Ave., thanked the Council for the opportunity to speak to them this evening. He stated there was an item on the agenda dealing with the removal of Mr. Karl Dhaliwal from the Southside Economic Development District Board. He said he knows the Council have been receiving calls and they understand there are people who feel they are doing the wrong thing. He further stated he wants the Council to hear him, and he said Mr. Dhaliwal supports the Southside of Monroe 110%. He said a lot of the businesses on the Southside and a lot of our people go to him and he has always been there for them. He said he is asking the City Council to please remove this item from the agenda to remove Mr. Dhaliwal from the SEDD board and not put it back on the agenda for the February 28<sup>th</sup> meeting. He said if the item is placed back on the agenda the Council will most likely have full attendance at the next meeting to support Mr. Dhaliwal. He noted an election will be coming up soon and if the Council thinks there are those that won't remember there will be those who will remember.

(2) Mr. Roosevelt Wright, 2416 Oak Street, said he has come to echo what Pastor McFarland said concerning Mr. Dhaliwal service on SEDD. He stated Mr. Dhaliwal's presents is immensely important



to the Southside because he has shown himself to be a person who is concerned about the Southside. He said he has come to most of the meetings, and he has been the person with the business viewpoint. He said Mr. Dhaliwal is opposed to the Southside having new taxes, he wants SEDD to follow all the established laws, he doesn't want the board to waste money paying Executive Directors, and he wants SEDD to do their best to get as much money to the Southside that they can. He noted Mr. Dhaliwal has always said why we can't work it out and work together. He said Mr. Dhaliwal has shown his love for the Southside in the last few months, he has been giving away gas at all of his stations for 76 cents a gallon and hundreds of people have been saving dollars. He stated he finds it difficult to say out of all the members on the board that they would want to remove Mr. Dhaliwal. He said the Indian Native in our community, basically, own most of the business in the Southside Economic District. He said in the future they would hope the Council would think about not removing him for no cause and he hasn't caused any problems, he hasn't broken any laws, and he's not been disruptive.

(3) Ms. Kenya Roberson, 116 Glenwood Drive, Monroe Regional Black Chamber of Commerce Executive Director, said she is coming before the Council in reference to Mr. Dhaliwal and she has been attending the SEDD meetings and she has learned what SEDD is supposed to do and what they are trying to do. She stated it seems that every time it is something in reference to SEDD they have to jump and rally the troops to get things done. She said she is asking the representatives of District 3,4, and 5 to advocate for the people who elected them. She said she has reached out to each Councilmember individually and she is asking that they listen to the leaders, constituents, the business owners, and the people who have put them in office. She said she understands as a body they have to get along but unfortunately the people that put them in office are the people they should be listening too. She said if they are not listening to them or hearing what they are saying that is a problem. She said they have begged and pleaded for the Council to not do certain things. She said she knows when Council was elected, she knows the community is supposed to trust them, but they were elected because of their word and the promise to do and listen to the people they represent in those Districts. She said she loves what is going on downtown, but they don't have to beg and plead to get what they need. She said all she is asking from Districts 3,4, and 5 is for them to give them the same fair treatment.

(4) Johnnie Thomas, 404 South 8<sup>th</sup>, wanted to know the status of the red-light project. She said she has seen engineers out there and they were very nice, but she wants to see where the City stands on the red-light project. She said the last accident at that location a Monroe Police Officer was involved, and it was a three-car accident.

Mayor Friday Ellis noted that is still in control of DOTD and once it comes into the City's control the City can handle that through traffic engineering. He said currently to do that the City has to do a traffic study which has been done and DOTD ultimately makes the decision on where the traffic lights go. The Mayor said he makes a commitment to Ms. Thomas on tonight in front of everybody that as soon as the City gets control of that they will put a traffic light there and he is sure the City Council will have no objection. He said he understands how passionate Ms. Thomas is about it and they understand it is a tremendous safety issue at that intersection.

Mr. Morgan McCallister, City Engineer, said there are somethings they are trying to implement right now, and he has drove to the intersection to watch the traffic. He said if you try to make a right turn the ditch top bank is right there and if someone is parked traffic behind that person is traveling 7 to 8 miles over the speed limit. He said they are looking at possibly filling in that ditch and working with DOTD to do what they can do now.

(5) Christopher Orange Sr., 3901 Old Sterlington Rd., said Happy Black History Month to everyone and gave credit to the Mayor for the 220 plus million-dollar capital improvements project. He said that shows the Mayor has been able to get some resources for the City with the government and he congratulated the Mayor on his leadership award. He stated he bragged about six months on the Oklahoma Quick Trip, and he gave them a call and there will be a Quick Trip in West Monroe, LA in December. On another note, he said since it is Black History Month, he is honored to be able to see Senator Katrina Jackson at Council Meeting and he said she has done a great job especially when he needed assistance. He stated SEDD and NAACP must work together to get resources for the City. He further stated we are supposed to put money in resources, but we should take the time to do that and come up with ways to better the City.

(6) Mr. Tony Little said on May 22, 2022, he stood before the Monroe City Council and SEDD articulated a 47 project aka the Southside Dream and the City Council passed the plan. He said when

they went back to looked at their operations and did comprehensive analogy from May 2018 up until December 31, 2022, SEDD collected just shy of \$600,000.00 but no real deliverables for Southern Monroe. He said SEDD was spending 56 cents out of every dollar on salaries and 40 cents was basically being spent on operations with the help of people like Mr. Dhaliwal. He said the City Council now have a plan that everything SEDD is doing is something that they approve and SEDD now have a housing committee, an infrastructure committee, a safe neighborhoods and crime committee, and a DBE in minority expansion committee. He said those committees are now being ran by trained professional consultants that are modeled after other boards within the City. He said we have an opportunity to start fresh and they need to listen to each other, and every difference doesn't have to emerge in a fight. He said if we are going to change Monroe, we have to put personal differences aside and the board feels they have exercised their responsibilities. He said in the first time since SEDD has been created a plan has been passed and they are doing the things that are consistent within that plan.

There being no further business to come before the council, the meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m., upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack and it was seconded by Mr. Marshall.

Mrs. Kema Dawson  
Chairman

Ms. Carolus S. Riley  
Council Clerk

Ileana Murray  
Staff Secretary