

City Hall, Monroe, Louisiana
February 28, 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: Mrs. Ezernack, Ms. Woods, Mr. Marshall, & Mrs. Dawson

There was absent: Mr. Harvey

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

The Invocation was led by Director of Purchasing Mr. Curt Kelly.

COMMUNICATIONS & SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Mrs. Ezernack said good evening to everyone and thanked everyone for being at Council meeting on tonight.

Ms. Woods said good evening and it is good to see everybody here. She said at the last Council meeting she stated she wasn't going to talk long because it was Sweethearts day but there are a couple of announcements she needs to reflect upon. She thanked the Renaissance Committee for an amazing 39th Black History Parade. She stated she actually put the first float in the Black History Parade 39 years ago and she has seen this parade grow from a small parade to over 250 entries this year and it was uneventful. She said the City came together in a very positive way and had a very great time. She said she wanted to thank the Renaissance Committee for their hard work because when you bring that many people together it is not easy. She stated she has one other issue she would like to address because the Thursday and Friday before the Valentine's Day City Council meeting her phone rang of the hook. She said it was being addressed that the intersection at Renwick Street and Highway 165 and the intersection at Louberta and Highway 165 would be closed. She said a lot of conversation came from that and she is sure everybody knows now that is not going to happen. She said there are some dollars out there and thanks to Senator Katrina Jackson District 3 will not lose those dollars by not closing it, however, those dollars will be rerouted from a safety perspective to make that area safe. She stated her hat goes off to Ms. Maria Brown because she happened to be at a meeting where this came out otherwise, they would not have known this was something being addressed. She said for the record she is not saying that the intersection was going to close, however, she knows there have been conversations about looking at something different. She stated this all came from a library board meeting where it was said that Carver Branch library was closing. She further stated for the record Carver Branch library is not closing but the library will be rebuilt at a different time.

Mr. Marshall said good evening to everyone, and he piggybacked off Councilwoman Woods to say Saturday was amazing to end this month with a celebration of that magnitude. He said he wasn't expecting anything like that or to see so many people. He said one thing he did notice there were people of all cultures and different backgrounds having fun. He said throughout this month the celebrations have been awesome, and it has been a collective effort. He said everyone was celebrating our black heritage and that's what it is all about but let's not end it on the 28th let's keep it going. He said the Renaissance Committee did an amazing job and for them to keep up the good work. On another note, he announced on March 10th is the Omega Psi Phi Father Daughter Dance at the University of Louisiana at Monroe Sub Ballroom. He said if you are a father to bring your daughters out for food, fun, and dancing.

Mrs. Dawson echoed the comments of Ms. Woods and Mr. Marshall, and she said the Black History Parade was awesome. She said this was probably the best parade she has ever experienced being included in. On another note, she said tonight she has the privilege of recognizing the Neville Jr. High Tigerline. She said she had the opportunity to watch the Neville Jr. High Tigerline in Lafayette, LA and they did an awesome job. She presented the Neville Jr. High Tigerline with a proclamation on behalf of Mayor Friday Ellis, the Monroe City Council and the citizens of Monroe commending the Neville Jr. High Tigerline for their achievements at the Louisiana State Dance Competition. Mrs. Dawson hereby proclaimed February 28, 2023, as Neville Jr. High Tigerline Day. She noted this is the end of Black History Month, and she was a part of a Black History

musical “Celebrating Who We Are” presented by Mr. Dontario Anderson. She said they had amazing leaders that directed and voices in the City that came to sing. She said hopefully as Mr. Marshall stated the City can keep this going and celebrate all year round.

Mayor Friday Ellis said good evening to everyone, and he echoed the comments of the Council members about the Renaissance Committee and the Black History Parade. He said there were 276 entries, and he gave a personal high praise to all who were involved. He further stated Congresswoman Julia Letlow with the community funding effort gave 4 million dollars to the Calypso Pump Station for it to be built on the correct side of the levy. He said that is the City’s oldest flood structure and the pumps will be getting an upgrade which will also help with the accreditation of the upper banks of the Ouachita River Valley. He stated it is a very critical infrastructure issue and he thanked Congresswoman Letlow. He added the City is very proud of the partnership with the Boys and Girls Club for after school tutoring at two of the City’s recreation centers to address the learning loss. He said we all understand the effects that covid-19 had on our families and especially with our children trying to close the achievement gap. The Mayor yielded the remainder of his time to Mrs. Kelsa McCrary.

Mrs. Kelsa McCrary, Chief Cultural & Economic Development Officer, said they are still waiting on the green light to release all the information, but they recently returned from a training session with City Smart funded by Bloomberg Philanthropies in a cohort with cities Newark and Sacramento. She stated the City of Monroe is the smallest and most southern in the cohort. She said they are going to connect the City Administration with experts in racial wealth equity by removing those barriers, by looking at city Ordinances and structures that exists inside of the City. She said they will focus on tangible, measurable, and sustainable outcomes to start to build generational wealth. She noted they will review all the things Ms. Ellen Hill, Director of Planning and Urban Development, and her team are doing and all the things that exist throughout the City. She further noted it will be a year long process with gathering information and this will reach every department inside of the City’s Administration. She said this is another way to connect the City Nationwide and a global expertise to help the City.

Upon motion of Mr. Marshall, seconded by Ms. Woods the minutes of the Legal and Regular Session of February 14, 2023, were unanimously approved. (There were no public comments.)

ACCEPTANCE OR REJECTION OF BIDS:

(a) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8458 accepting the base bid of Womack and Sons Construction Group, LLC, in the amount of \$781,270.00 for the Ruffin Drive Water Distribution Improvements Project, and further authorizing an authorized city representative, to enter into and execute a contract for said work. (There were no public comments.)

Ms. Woods wanted someone to bring her up to speed on what the City is doing with this item and where the money is coming from.

Mrs. Dawson said she thinks this is by far one of the greatest things happening on the Southside.

Mr. Sean Benton said this project is part of the Ruffin Drive Water Storage Tank Project. He said years ago they had a major issue with the water that comes from Ruffin Drive into neighborhoods up to Interstate 20. He said that line ruptured years ago from the Coca Cola building and it was disconnected from the system and causing some quality and pressure issues. He said they are reopening up that system again with better quality water and better water for fire protection.

Mayor Ellis stated there is a cost share as well.

Mr. Benton said that is correct, there will be a cost share with the I-20 Board and it will be a 50% match.

(b) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8459 accepting the base bid of Grindstone Construction, LLC, in the amount of \$57,000.00 for the Motor Vehicle Wall Damage Repairs Project, and further authorizing an authorized city representative, to enter into and execute a contract for said work. (There were no public comments.)

Ms. Woods wanted to know if the damage was from a storm.

Mayor Friday Ellis said someone backed into or drove through the wall at the Motor Vehicle building and there was some interior wall damage, exterior brick damage, and probably some framing and dry wall.

RESOLUTIONS AND MINUTE ENTRIES:

(a) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack seconded by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8460 granting an exception to the Open Container Ordinance to the Twin City Art Foundation (Reception: 60th Annual Juried Competition 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.)

(b) Upon motion of Mr. Marshall seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8461 granting an exception to the Open Container Ordinance to the Twin City Art Foundation (Off the Wall Annual Fundraiser) 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 Mrs. Ezernack seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8462 granting exception to the Open Container Ordinance to the Children's Coalition of NELA (The Annual Dragon Boat Festival) 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 Planning & Urban Development:

(a) Upon motion of Ms. Woods seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8463 authorizing Mayor Friday Ellis to substantially amend the fy 21 Annual Action Plan & fy 2020-2024 Consolidated Plan to expend American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARP) funds under the home program. Funding will provide housing, shelter, and supportive services for persons experiencing or at risk of homelessness, fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking or human trafficking, and other vulnerable populations at greatest risk of housing instability in the amount of \$1,167,981.00 from ARP act Funding, and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Ms. Woods wanted to know what is going on with this item.

Ms. Ellen Hill said this is an opportunity to invest 1.167981 million dollars in housing relating to assistance. She said the City was awarded through Housing and Urban Development and the American Rescue Plan funds to prevent homelessness and those who are at risk of homelessness. She said the draft plan that the Council has received they plan to submit to Housing & Urban Development through the City's action plan process to expend the funds. She said they will be accepting applications once the plan is approved. She stated this is an opportunity to provide tenant based rental assistance and they recognized that there are opportunities for them to help more people in the community. She further stated the bulk of the funding will go towards tenant based rental assistance and support of services to provide them with financial education to become more financially stable.

Ms. Woods said for the benefit of the audience and those who may be listening from home, she asked Ms. Hill to explain tenant base assistance.

Ms. Hill said they will take applications from individuals and their income will determine their eligibility. She said they will work to ensure they don't spend more than 30% of their income in housing. She said once that amount is calculated they will take up the gap to allow someone to get on their feet. She said their goal is to be able to offer 12 months of assistance to give the individual a chance to move on successfully.

Ms. Woods said this is really great stuff.

Mayor Ellis asked Ms. Hill to share with the audience where the source of these funds will come from.

Ms. Hill said HUD was allowed to get funding and it was actually allocated to the home partnership funds. She said the American Rescue Plan is a large bill and the funds are specially allocated to HUD home partnership program.

Mrs. Ezernack thanked Ms. Hill and said this is very exciting and she can't wait for the outcome.

Mayor's Office:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Marshall seconded by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8464 authorizing the City of Monroe to apply for, accept, and provide up to \$3,000,000 in matching funds for the South Monroe Corridor Improvement Project and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Ms. Woods said this appears to be exciting and she would like to hear more about this item. She wanted to know where the matching funds of 3 million dollars will come from.

Mrs. Meghan Risinger, Grant Writer, said this is coming from the CIC funds and they are requesting 25 million dollars. She said this will be from South Second to Calypso Street to Plum Street. She said they will be adding bike lanes and sidewalks along that corridor. She said there will be some traffic calming to slow people down, lighting, and bus stops to make it safer. She noted also included in the application will be artwork under Interstate 20 to beautify the area and help people feel safe as they're navigating the corridor.

Mrs. Dawson said she is loving this, and they have been talking about this for a very long time. She said to see it getting ready to start is amazing.

Mayor Ellis said this is part of the cohort with Smart Growth America who the Council met while they were in Washington, DC. He said Transportation for America will be providing technical assistance and they liked the City's project. He said part of this is to adopt what they call Complete Streets Program within the City. He noted the City of Monroe was the only one in the cohort that didn't have a Complete Streets Policy and that is what the community is seeing on Lee Avenue and South Grand. He said with corridor projects you are looking at lighting, beautification, art, and to provide beautiful spaces whenever you move these projects. He said initially they were going to go after reconnecting communities but that is a 50/50 match and to get that nonfederal match down lower it would have been a heavy lift on a twenty something million-dollar project. He said the Raise Grant is the application the City will apply for on this project, and this will also compliment what the City is doing on Winnsboro Road with the sidewalk and lighting project.

Ms. Woods stated she would like to be the first to put in an application for District 3 because they are still apart of the South side of Monroe, and they need something like this in District 3.

Mayor Ellis stated the Highway 165 project Mrs. Woods referenced earlier may have some serious issues connectively in the neighborhood and the Highway 165 project is also a part of a Complete Streets Program. He said ultimately, they are trying to create these corridors that complement the work that the State is doing as well.

Mr. Marshall wanted to know will there be a phase two.

Mrs. Risinger said there will be a phase two from Plum Street to Winnsboro Road. She said the application threshold was 25 million dollars and if they would have included Plum Street they would have gone over.

Mayor Ellis stated there is a project going from Desiard Street, down to Jackson to the Plum Street corridor which is all a complete street project as well. He said there will be sidewalks and lighting which adds up to a significant investment.

(b) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8465 authorizing a designated city representative to enter into a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement between the City of Monroe and the Interstate 20 Economic Development Corporation for the Ruffin Drive Water Distribution Improvements Project, and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

(c) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8466 authorizing a designated city representative to enter into a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement between the City of Monroe and the Northeast Louisiana Children's Museum and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Ms. Woods said she kind of understands what the City is doing with this item but would like to talk about it for the benefit of those listening at home and those in the audience to have a better understanding.

Ms. Melissa Saye, Northeast Louisiana Children's Museum, said they are entering into a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement to lease a portion of the land where the old swimming pool is located. She said they will build a brand-new state of the art 22,000 square feet Children's Museum for children in our community and for the surrounding parishes. She said it will increase their opportunity for outdoor learning.

Ms. Woods wanted to know will they be leaving the location on Walnut Street.

Ms. Saye said they needed to expand, and they have been turning down groups because of the space. She said they don't have the opportunity for outdoor learning at that location and they wanted a building that is built to be a Children's Museum instead of one they had to make into one.

Ms. Woods said this is great, and they have been doing a great job at the Children's Museum.

Ms. Saye stated the Children's Museum wouldn't be here without the support of the City and the community and they are thankful.

Department of Public Works:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Marshall seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8467 authorizing acceptance of Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Small Urban Section 5339 bus and Bus Facility Urban Funds for Monroe Transit and further providing with respect thereto.

Mr. Eugene Payne, 1705 Reed St., said he is always worried when the City gets these Resolutions through the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) there are millions of dollars being assessed without explanation on how the funds are being used. He wanted to know exactly what the funds are being used for and he said at the last meeting he never received a straight answer about the projects that are being funded.

Mr. Marc Keenan, General Manager Monroe Transit, said they are coming before the Council for them to approve and accept a grant for Transit in the amount of 4 million dollars that will be used to purchase an electric bus.

Mr. Payne wanted to clarify this is the bus that was discussed last meeting.

Mr. Keenan said that would be correct.

Mr. Payne wanted to know what the bus was being replaced with.

Mr. Keenan said it is a 2009 Gillig bus.

Mr. Payne wanted to know if the old bus is an electric bus.

Mr. Keenan said the bus that the grant will be used to replaced is a diesel bus and it will be replaced with an electric bus.

Mr. Payne wanted to know what series the bus will be.

Mr. Keenan said they call it an E bus.

Mrs. Dawson asked Mr. Payne to further discuss this item with Mr. Keenan after the meeting.

(b) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8468 authorizing a designated city representative to execute Change Order No. One (1) for the Water Treatment Plant Improvements High Service Control Vault Repairs Project, between the City of Monroe and Dixie Overland Construction LLC for an increase in the contract amount of \$52,500.00 and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Engineering Services:

(a) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8469 authorizing a designated city representative to execute Change Order No. Two (2) for the Deborah Drive Cross Drains Replacement Project, between the City of Monroe and CW&W Contractors, Inc. for an increase in the contract amount of \$14,015.40 and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

(b) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack seconded by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8470 authorizing Mayor Friday Ellis to execute a Utility Relocation Agreement with Entergy for the Kansas-Lane-Garrett Road Connector and I-20 Improvements Project (Project No. H007300) and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS & ORDINANCES:

(a) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance amending and adjusting the City of Monroe Operating Budget for the fiscal year 2022-2023. (Admin) (There were no public comments.)

(b) Upon motion of Mr. Marshall seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance changing the salary of the Council Members of the City of Monroe and further providing with respect thereto.

Mrs. Ezernack stated she will second the motion for the purpose of Introduction.

Ms. Jackie Slack, 6519 Cypress Point Drive, wanted to know when will these raises come into effect.

Mrs. Dawson stated they will be effective after the next election. She further stated the raise is not effective for the current City Council.

Ms. Kenya Roberson, 116 Glenwood Drive, said she is all for people getting raises and she thinks if someone is doing a good job, they should definitely receive a raise. She stated she has worked for her boss 22 years, and she has never received a 45% raise and she wanted to know what were the metrics that were used within a 2 year time frame to say the Mayor should get 45%.

Mrs. Ezernack noted they are on the item for the Council.

Ms. Roberson apologized, and she said she thought they were together.

Mr. Charles Theus, 503 Speed Avenue, said when Mr. Kenneth Wilson was on the City Council, he approached him and said they are giving out more money than they take in. He said he is in full support of this item because when Mr. Jamie Mayo was Mayor, he told him they set the amount a little low because the old Council compared it to Alexandria and Shreveport, LA. He said at that time he thinks it was about \$1,800 they were trying to do. He said he told one of the current Council members it should be around \$2,500 but he agrees with Ms. Roberson that there should be some kind of metric. He said he thinks the last time the Council received a raise was in 2007.

Mrs. Dawson noted it was in 2003.

Mr. Theus said this is the type of thing you really need to look at and they are looking out for the future Council. He said please look at it and maybe put something together in the future that says every 4 or 5 years that the Council will consider giving themselves a raise and also the Mayor. He said there are Mayors of smaller cities making what the City of Monroe current Mayor is making without the budget or the departments. He said don't look at the political side of it but do it because of the position not because of the person.

Bishop Pat Hezekiah, 2807 Oak Street, said the Council needs to think about what Mr. Theus stated and he wanted to know why the Council is getting 40 cents on to what they are already getting and why is it so low. He said the Council is getting part time pay with a full-time job and he said the Council should get the amount they deserve because he is a taxpayer who is willing to pay it.

(c) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance changing the salary of the Mayor of the City of Monroe and further providing with respect thereto.

Ms. Jackie Slack, 6519 Cypress Point Drive, wanted to know if this will take effect the year prior to an election.

Mrs. Dawson said this is for after the election.

Ms. Slack wanted to know if Legal is sure they are in compliance with the City charter.

Mrs. Angie Sturdivant, City Attorney, said yes it cannot go into effect until July 1, 2024.

Ms. Slack said this is not against the race and she thinks the City of Monroe Mayor whoever it may be deserves a raise. She said she wanted us to know we have certain things in place that we need to abide by.

Ms. Kenya Roberson, 116 Glenwood Drive, stated again for the record that she believes that anyone should receive a raise if they have done a great job, but she is saying the percentage for the Mayor of 45% is a lot. She said she thinks that is a lot for whoever will be the Mayor at that time, and she said she has done research on other Mayors in other cities within the State. She said she sees other City employees who work tirelessly but how many of them have gotten a 45% raise.

Mrs. Sturdivant stated Civil Services gets a 2% raise every year.

Ms. Roberson said she thinks if the City is going to give huge raises like this they should start at the bottom and go up. She said there are people who are out there daily working tirelessly, sweating, and sometimes overlooked. She noted there are departments who are said to have their own budget such as the Marshall's Office and City Court and to say whoever the Mayor is next year he or she should get a 45% raise; she thinks it is a lot. She said she thinks a lot of the City of Monroe employees would agree and she wanted to know who came up with the percentage.

Chief Jimmie Bryant, Chief Operating Officer, said this is not an arbitrary number that the City came up with and Mayor Ellis had absolutely nothing to do with it. He stated this was proposed from the Mayor's Executive Staff which includes Ms. Stacey Rowell, Department of Administration, Mrs. Angie Sturdivant, City Attorney, and himself. He said doing the staff meeting he asked the Mayor to leave the room and it was not discussed with the Mayor until the Executive Staff decided to move forward. He further stated if you use the consumer index this number is too low, and it is actually 15 to 16 thousand dollars lower.

Mrs. Ezernack wanted Chief Bryant to state the year the Mayor salary was last increased.

Chief Bryant said in 1979 the City Charter was written and between 1979 and 2003 the Mayor's salary went from \$40,000 to \$90,000 which was a \$50,000 increase in a 23-to-24-year time period. He said in over 20 years that salary has not been adjusted at all. He said the nature of this game has changed and it is not the same as when the charter was written and there has not been anything done to keep up the pace with where it should be. He noted the Mayor nor the City Council can take advantage of one penny during this current term. He further noted he wants to make it clear this is not a personal issue, but this is about the position and what would be a reasonable amount to pay an Executive Official who is performing the duties of a major metropolitan city. He said he is not sure where Ms. Roberson's numbers came from, but his numbers differ and even some smaller cities make more than the City of Monroe's Mayor salary.

Ms. Roberson said the Mayor of Alexandria, LA makes \$125,000.

Chief Bryant stated the Mayor of Alexandria, LA makes \$135,504 and he said he is confident with his numbers. He further stated these cities are audited and the numbers are posted in their audit reports by law. He said he doesn't understand when it comes to the Mayor's salary whoever it is it becomes an issue.

Ms. Roberson stated this has nothing to do with Mayor Ellis and she said she doesn't care who it is going to be, but she is speaking on the position of the Mayor. She said she thinks everyone is assuming it is personal when it is not. She stated for the Mayor of Monroe to have a 45% increase she thinks that is a lot. She said she thinks some of that money could have been allocated towards City workers.

Chief Bryant noted that would be 15 cents if they took that money to give to the City employees.

Mrs. Dawson wanted to clarify the last time the Mayor's salary was adjusted was in 2003.

Chief Bryant stated 2003 was the last time the Mayor or the City Council salary was adjusted.

Mrs. Dawson wanted to know if the Mayor received a 2% raise what would the amount be.

Chief Bryant said that would be right at 40%.

Mrs. Sturdivant noted as Chief Bryant proposed earlier with the inflation calendar from March 2003 to January 2023 it shows the Mayor's salary should be about \$146,000.

Mrs. Dawson wanted to know what happen when the previous Council requested a raise.

Mrs. Ezernack and Ms. Woods stated it was never requested.

Bishop Pat Hezekiah, 2807 Oak Street, said he had a problem with the amount at first but after talking to people about it he was okay. He said it should be up to \$165,000 as far as he is concerned, and he said he does think the City should consider the City workers along the way. He said he thinks it is a good thing for the Mayor and the City Council, but we can't please everyone.

Detective Chris Turner, Monroe Police Department, said the position of the Mayor is similar to the position law enforcement is in today. He said the whole department is scrutinized on social media in every stance whether its Facebook, snapchat or twitter. He said the police department is doing everything they can to recruit quality workers but if the base salary isn't what it needs to be their only option is to lower their standards. He said police departments across the country are lowering their standards and crime is rising. He stated if the City lowers their standards what will they be left with and the Mayor's position is the same.

Ms. Woods said for the record when she served in her first term the conversation was brought up to raise the salary of the Mayor and the City Council. She said the Council couldn't come together on a consensus to do that, but she thought in her first term that there needed to be an increase. She said she didn't know what the increase looked like or what the number would be but there definitely needs to be an increase. She further noted she has had conversations with her constituents that suggested doing an incremental increase to get to 45. She stated on tonight she is voting to introduce the item, however, she is definitely open to it. She said one thing if anybody knows her, she listens to her constituents and at the end of the day she is the voice of the people who elected her. She said without them she would not have a seat on the Council and she serves at the pleasure of the people who elected her and she is thankful. She said she will vote to introduce it and over the next two weeks there will be conversations and then she will decide what her final vote will be.

ADD-ON: Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack seconded by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to add item (d) to Introduce an Ordinance to amend the zoning map for the City of Monroe, Louisiana, and providing further with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack seconded by Ms. Woods and approved to Introduce an Ordinance to amend the zoning map for the City of Monroe, Louisiana, and providing further with respect thereto. (Mr. Marshall abstain) (There were no public comments.)

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

Chairman noted request to Passover items (a), (b), (c), & (d) for further advertisement by March 28, 2023, City Council meeting.

(a) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack, seconded by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to Passover item (a) 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 Mrs. Ezernack, seconded by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to Passover item (b) 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. (There were no public comments.)

(c) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack, seconded by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to Passover item (c)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 Mrs. Ezernack, seconded by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to Passover item (d)an Ordinance amending Ordinance No. 11,263 which authorized a Lease

between American Airlines and the City of Monroe/ Monroe Regional Airport and further providing with respect thereto. (Airport) (There were no public comments.)

Ms. Woods wanted to know if the items will be brought back next City Council meeting.

Ms. Angie Sturdivant, City Attorney, said it will be brought back March 28th.

Ms. Woods wanted to know if the Council needs to put a date on when the items will be back on the agenda.

Mrs. Sturdivant apologized for not putting a date.

Mrs. Carolus Riley, Council Clerk, stated the advertisement will take that long.

CITIZENS PARTICIPATION:

(1.) Bishop Pat Hezekiah, 2807 Oak Street, thanked Councilwoman Woods and stated District 3 loves her and she has done everything she said she would do. He thanked Ms. Marie Brown for spreading the word about the library possibly closing on Renwick Street.

(2.) Mr. Derek Kennedy, 700 Glammar, said he is an individual who listens to a police scanner, and to hear a policeman say they are being shot at and they think this is an ambush are some strong words to hear. He said the City has to pull more young people in to get more policemen on the street. He said from what he can figure the City is about 120 officers same as in 1980. He congratulated the Mayor and the City Council for the progress they have made in the City. He said he knows the police are getting paid the sign on bonus over a period of time, but the City has to bump up the salary. He stated if we want to make Monroe what we want it to be we have to make the police some of the highest paid in the State. He further stated he has been here for over 40 years and anything we need to do he is willing to help.

Ms. Kenya Roberson, 116 Glenwood Drive, thanked the Council for the recognition on behalf of the Renaissance Committee. She said she is on that committee, and she stated they had 276 entries making them the largest parade. She said to see all cultures and races was pure joy and it brought tears to her eyes because she prayed for that. She noted she wish they had more local media presence, and they made history something that has never been done before. She thanked the City workers and the police department for their hard work and dedication because it took all of them to make it happen. She thanked everyone who participated from the bottom of the hearts of everyone on the Renaissance Committee.

Ms. Sonya Jacobs, 700 University Avenue, said on last week she had the pleasure to spend the week in Washington, DC and there was a Minority Enterprise Conference sponsored by the United States Department of Entergy. She said the conference was well attended and emotional because an unprecedented act took place. She said for the first time in the United States Department of Entergy they awarded a black owned consortium 6.3 million dollars. She noted when she heard Ms. Kelsa McCrary talk about the racial equity it prompted her to come to the microphone to share. She said the racial wealth group in this country is real, but we are making strides to close that racial wealth gap. She said they want to know how they can assist in the endeavor in Monroe, LA and they want to see better equity in the contracting and procurement practices. She said they would like to partner with the City and they are not asking for a nickel or a penny but their phones are open.

There being no further business to come before the council, the meeting was adjourned at 7:22 p.m., upon motion of Ms. Woods and it was seconded by Mr. Marshall.

Mrs. Kema Dawson
Chairman

Ms. Carolus S. Riley
Council Clerk

Ileana Murray
Staff Secretary

