

Monroe City Council Legal and Regular Session
June 8, 2021
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, June 8, 2021, at the Council's regular meeting place, 400 Lea Joyner Memorial Expressway, City Council Chambers/City Hall Building, Monroe, Louisiana.

The Honorable Douglas Harvey, Chairman, called the meeting to order.

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

Council members present for roll call: Mr. Douglas Harvey, Mrs. Gretchen Ezernack, Ms. Juanita Woods, Mr. Carday Marshall Sr., Mrs. Kema Dawson.

Council member (s) absent: NONE.

Chairman Harvey declared a quorum.

The Invocation was done by Councilwoman Dawson's designee, Pastor Matthew Carpenter, Grace Point Monroe Community, and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Councilwoman Dawson.

COMMUNICATIONS & SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. Mr. Harvey welcomed and thanked everyone for attending tonight's Council meeting.

2. Mrs. Ezernack welcomed and thanked everyone for attending tonight's meeting. She acknowledged Mr. Verbon Muhammad in the audience and stated that she wanted to clear up something with him, commenting that everyone felt the pain and suffering of the family that lost their loved one that Mr. Muhammad brings up when presented to Council each time; she commented that he has been asking them to do something that they can not do and the other thing is he has been asking for body cam footage and other information that they can't authorize and would not want to authorize that would have problems later on if there were charges filed; she commented that she understands where he was coming from, but Council is the Legislative body, and Council is not the Administration and the rest of it is being handled by the Administration and doesn't know if anybody has brought it up and that he's aware of it, and do appreciate his presence and input at each meeting and do want him to know that as a legislative body there is nothing that Council can do; Council can't pass a resolution asking for that or that kind of thing, and do hope he understands it and condolences to the family.

3. Ms. Woods welcomed all for being present as well as those watching on social media. She welcomed Mr. Roy Heatherly, the new President of Monroe Chambers. She expressed her condolences to the family of Mr. Quinton Carter, who died as the result of drowning at Marbles Recreation Center. She stated when she gets phone calls from her constituents she likes for them to know that a lot of things are beyond her control, but want them to always know that she is a voice for them; she commented that what she found out recently, and thanked Mr. Ray Wright, Ms. Patience Talley for the conversations had over the last couple days and do understand that the summer program is starting tomorrow at the recreation centers; she told Mrs. Sturdivant that she wanted to visit with her as soon as they could and do understand that the rates are going up and do understand that in the past it has been six dollars for the programs and Patience told her that it was a totally different kind of program; that it will be enrichment, it won't be a baby sitting program, etc. and do understand it, but do understand that it is going up from six dollars to fifteen dollars; she commented when there were rate changes in the past, asked if those things needed to come before the Council in order to put them into effect. Mrs. Sturdivant said she was not involved in the rate increase and can get with Mr. Seegers and Ms. Talley and look into it and do know that the zoo entrance fees, rental fees are set by ordinance and not sure if a camp fee is, does not think so, but not certain and will look into it. Ms. Woods commented that she understands the donations that have been offered and will help the children who might not be able; she commented that she doesn't want any child left behind, when it comes to the summer programs, because the reason we have the programs is to help enrich them, to take them off the street to give them something constructive to do during the summer months and want to make sure that if a child comes to any of the centers and the monies are not there, that she wants someone to call her and then will see what it is she can do to find some sponsors to make sure we have our children in the programs; she commented that if anyone wanted to go back and quote her, just say that we are going to make sure that no child is turned down, even with the increase in cost and will figure out a way for them to be in the summer programs, if they choose to be.

4. Mr. Marshall welcomed and thanked everyone for being present and those watching along on social media. Mr. Marshall commented in reference to the summer programs that Omega Psi Phi Fraternity will be sponsoring over 150 kids for the summer program and all they would need to do is register at the recreation centers or get in touch with Ms. Talley to get the registrations and they do have sponsors that have been pouring in and it will have a major impact on the summer program this year; he thanked his Fraternity for coming together and offering support. Mr. Marshall announced the Juneteenth parade and festival in south Monroe, beginning at Wossman and it will go down Burg Jones Lane, ending at Charles Johnson Park with a festival from 11am-5pm. Mr. Marshall commented in reference to Mrs. Ezernack comments that over the past couple of years, we have experienced a lot and although you haven't heard much up here, but that the Council is doing everything that it can to make sure that justice is being served; police reform is being made and are making progress as far as it relates to police reform and have been talking with the Administration, MPD Chief Zordan, and he has had hundreds of hours with the force as it relates to de-escalation tactics and discussing the whole application process; he commented that just because you don't hear anything up here, doesn't mean they aren't having the hard conversations to make those things happen and do appreciate Brother Muhammad and others that are stepping forward to help ensure that justice is being served and do thank you for that and encourage you to share information with them and that he is willing to work with anyone; no one on Council wants to see anyone treated unfairly and have experienced it and do know firsthand; he shared example about when he was younger and had a nice car/nice rims and anything outside of two inches was considered illegal and would get pulled over because the rims were too wide and now everyone is riding big wheels, four and five inches outside their trucks and nothing is being said about it and do think that it is still law; he commented that Council is still working and do appreciate the efforts of everyone to make sure that all lives are being treated fairly. He thanked everyone for their passion for the community.

5. Mrs. Dawson welcomed each one present. She thanked Pastor Vance Price for hosting District 5's first town hall meeting, as it was a success, and a lot of information was given out; information can be found on the New St. James Baptist Church's Facebook page; Chief Zordan and staff were present and gave out information regarding things going on in the City and programs for the youth this summer. Mrs. Dawson yielded her remaining time to Mrs. Patience Talley to give more information on the summer programs at the recreation centers; Mrs. Talley, Director of Community Centers and Programs gave detailed information on the summer programs and commented that the program was not a babysitting program, but rather an enrichment program. She read an overview of information about the summer program which included daily educational programs, and the focus will be education and healthy futures; programs will include Mindful Mondays, Tasty Tuesdays, Wellness Wednesdays, Thoughtful Thursdays, and Fitness Fridays; they will have an education hour where they will cover math, science, reading, geography, culture, art, and there will also be snacks, as well as stories where they will partner with the Ouachita Public Library to bring in age appropriate books and kits that go along with the books so that the kids are learning, and reading; there are also fun activities including boxing for all ages one day a week at all centers, tennis lessons, community speakers will speak on prevention of underage drinking; she said the cost is different but the City has been blessed to have the support of Omega Psi Phi paying for 140 campers; she asked that instead of complaining, to come and ask, and said that she has talked with several people and have told them that if they are used to paying six dollars, then she will pay the additional cost; she said they don't send them students to register because she is willing to do that and the City is not trying to take resources away from the community, but is trying to give them quality resources; she said they have reduced the amount of kids that will come to camps and they are at seventy five, this is due to Covid and also to make sure the kids are protected and to have a good ratio of 1 to 10. Mrs. Dawson said there is also zoo camper information and that can be found on the City of Monroe's Zoo Facebook page.

6. Mr. Jimmie Bryant spoke on behalf of Mayor Ellis who was not present; Mayor Ellis is out of town on business; he commented on behalf of the Mayor and asked for the patience of the community as the Mayor deals with a lot of issues facing the City and asked for support on a lot of initiatives and programs for the City.

Mr. Harvey commented his understanding of frustration with a system that gives these kinds of results and when you look at them with the results, it is flaw; it is not unique to us, not a Monroe problem, and it's not like we have a bright shining light on us, it's not unique to us and it's not just our problem; he commented that everyone that he has talked with on the Council and the Administration has committed to results and do welcome anyone to call his cell at 243-3499 and am committed to anyone that wants to be a part of a solution because the results aren't there; there are people all over the community that wants to be a part of the answers and he is one of them and to feel free to reach out to him at any stage and do want results.

Upon a motion of Mr. Marshall and a second by Mrs. Dawson, the minutes of the Legal and Regular session of May 25, 2021, were unanimously approved. (There were no public comments)

PRESENTATION: NONE.

PUBLIC HEARINGS: NONE.

PROPOSED CONDEMNATIONS: Public Comment:

1. 308 Marx Street (D5) (Owners - Chasity Gray, OPPJ) Upon a motion by Mrs. Dawson, second by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved for property owner to be given 30 days or July 9, 2021, in which to bring the structure into compliance with the code or demolish the structure and clean the lot

Comments: PowerPoint slides of pictorial evidence for the current state of the property and discussion on the property's condition were presented by PUD Director, Mrs. Ellen Hill; the owners started tearing it down this week. Mr. Luther Reed, husband of the property owner spoke to inquire if they could be given more time to tear the structure down.

ACCEPTANCE OR REJECTION OF BIDS: Public Comment None.

RESOLUTIONS AND MINUTE ENTRIES

1. Council: Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7984, appointing the Monroe News-Star as the Official Journal of the City of Monroe, Louisiana, pursuant to the Louisiana R. S. 43:141 et. seq. and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments)

2. Department of Administration: Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Mr. Marshall, second by Mrs. Dawson to Consider an Application by Hailey Ray dba Downtown Billiards, LLC, 524 Desiard St., Monroe, LA 71201 for a New 2021 Class A Alcoholic Beverage Permit. The Monroe Police Department has no disqualifying records and Sales Tax has been Cleared, CO-Cleared, Distance Report Cleared. (There were no public comments)

(b) Upon a motion by Mr. Marshall, second by Mrs. Dawson to Consider an Application by C. Everett Stagg dba The Caddy Shack Golf Bar, 2273 Louisville Ave., Monroe, LA 71201 for a New 2021 Class A Alcoholic Beverage Permit. The Monroe Police Department has no disqualifying records and Sales Tax has been Cleared, CO-Cleared, Distance Report Cleared. (There were no public comments)

3. Department of Planning & Urban Development:

Public Comment:

None.

4. Legal Department:

Public Comment:

None.

5. Mayor's Office:

Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7985, authorizing the Director of Administration to enter into a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement with the Miss Monroe Scholarship Pageant Organization Inc and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments)

(b) Upon a motion by Mrs. Dawson, second by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7986, authorizing Mayor Friday Ellis to apply for a \$500,000 grant from the Delta Regional Authority and further providing with respect thereto.

Comments: Mr. Verbon Muhammad, commented that the item was understood by him to be that the Mayor was being authorized to apply for a grant for himself; Mr. Harvey said this was an application for DRA funds; Mrs. Sturdivant commented for the Mayor to sign the application and documents for the City of Monroe; Ms. Golden explained the application being submitted to DRA for funding to do a water treatment project. The water treatment project will benefit all citizens. Ms. Woods commented the question by Mr. Muhammad being a good question as the Council have detailed information, but for others and those on social media, they may not know what is being talked about; she thanked Mrs. Sturdivant and Ms. Golden for explaining the item. Mrs. Ezernack commented the agenda packet that Council has is also posted on the City website every Thursday.

6. Department of Public Works:

Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7987, requesting to reject all bids received on May 18, 2021, for the Secondary Clarifier #1 at the Water Pollution Control Center and re-advertise said project, and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments)

(b) Upon a motion by Ms. Woods, second by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7988, authorizing Mayor Friday Ellis to accept any grant offers from the FAA through December 31, 2021, for the Monroe Regional Airport that do not require matching funds, and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments)

7. Department of Community Affairs:

Public Comment:

None.

8. Police Department:

Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved to Consider request from the Monroe Police Department for authorization to advertise for bids for Police Uniforms. Funds will be derived from the Police Department Uniforms and Equipment Account. With Council approval the contracts will be for one year with the option to renew two (2) times with terms and prices to remain the same and not to exceed a total of three years. (There were no public comments)

(b) Upon a motion by Mrs. Dawson, second by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved to Consider request from the Monroe Police Department for authorization to advertise for bids for Police Specialized Uniforms. Funds will be derived from the Police Department Uniforms and Equipment Account. With Council approval the contracts will be for one year with the option to renew two (2) times with terms and prices to remain the same and not to exceed a total of three years. (There were no public comments)

(c) Upon a motion by Mrs. Dawson, second by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to Consider request from the Monroe Police Department for authorization to advertise for bids for Police Equipment. Funds will be derived from the Police Department Uniforms and Equipment Account. With Council approval the contracts will be for one year with the option to renew two (2) times with terms and prices to remain the same and not to exceed a total of three years. (There were no public comments)

(d) Upon a motion by Mr. Marshall, second by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7989, authorizing the donation of 22 vests and 13 helmets to the Richland Parish Sheriff's Office and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments)

9. Fire Department:

Public Comment:

None.

10. Engineering Services:
Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7990, accepting the base bid of Max Foote Construction Co. LLC, in the amount \$45,550,000.00 and Alternate No.1 in the amount of \$1,090,000.00, for the Water Treatment Plant Renovation and Expansion Project, and further authorizing an authorized city representative, to enter into and execute a contract for said work. (There were no public comments)

Comments: Ms. Golden thanked everyone for their work on the project; she commented and explained that it is the major water treatment plant expansion rehab project. The DBE goal is 16.7% and the contractor did exceed the goal at over 17%.

(b) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to remove from the agenda to adopt a resolution authorizing an authorized city representative to advertise for bids on the CenturyLink Drive Bridge over Bayou Desiard Project. The estimated cost of this project is \$_____. The DBE Goal is _____ and source of funds Capital Infrastructure Sales Tax Revenue Funds and FEMA Reimbursements. (There were no public comments)

Mr. Harvey commented that the item is being removed due to waiting on final approval from FEMA.

(c) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7991, authorizing an authorized city representative, to enter into and execute a Professional Services Agreement with Burns and McDonnell Engineering Company, Inc., to provide construction engineering services for the Water Treatment Plant Renovation & Expansion Project and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments)

Comments: Ms. Golden explained this item was the engineering services to be provided during the course of the construction contract for the water treatment expansion project.

(d) Upon a motion by Mr. Marshall, second by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7992, authorizing an authorized city representative, to enter into and execute a Professional Services Agreement with Arcadis U.S., Inc., to provide engineering and other professional services for the Texas Standifer Gravity Sanitary Sewer Improvements Project and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments)

Comments: Ms. Golden explained the item was for the trunkline that runs between the Texas Avenue pipe service lift station and the Standifer Avenue service lift station and its impacting ability to provide reliable sewer services throughout most of the city.

(e) Upon a motion by Mrs. Dawson, second by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7993, authorizing an authorized city representative, to enter into and execute a Professional Master Services Agreement with Ardaman & Associates, Inc., to provide Geotechnical Engineering & Construction Materials Testing Services and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments)

Comments: Mr. Verbon Muhammad asked which item was being discussed. Ms. Golden explained the item was a renewal of a service agreement that the city already in place.

(f) Upon a motion by Mrs. Dawson, second by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7994, authorizing Friday Ellis, Mayor, to enter into and execute a Professional Services Agreement with S. E. Huey Company, to provide engineering & surveying services for the Louisiana Purchase Gardens & Zoo Master Plan Project on Winnsboro Road S.P.N. – H.007531 and further providing with respect thereto.

Comments: Mr. Harvey made correction to resolution, to strike out the following: Winnsboro Road S.P.N. - H.00753. Mr. Muhammad asked about the agenda item; Mr. Harvey said it is for the existing zoo.

(g) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7995, supporting the City of Monroe Federal Funding Request to reconstruct or relocate the Calypso Stormwater Pump Station, and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments)

(h) Add-On: Upon a motion by Ms. Woods, second by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved to Adopt a Resolution authorizing an authorized City Representative, to enter into and execute a Professional Services Agreement with Arcadis U.S., Inc., to provide engineering and other professional services for the 2021 Raise Grant application relating to the H.007289 Kansas Lane Extension Project and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments)

Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7996, authorizing an authorized City Representative, to enter into and execute a Professional Services Agreement with Arcadis U.S., Inc., to provide engineering and other professional services for the 2021 Raise Grant application relating to the H.007289 Kansas Lane Extension Project and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments)

Comments: Ms. Golden explained the item was for the Kansas Lane extension project and the Raise application and part of the grant is a traffic study, benefit cost analysis. Mrs. Ezernack thanked her for all of the work they have done and continue to do.

BREAK IF NEEDED:

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS & ORDINANCES:

Public Comment:

None.

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

Open Public Hearing/Public Comment/Close Hearing: Chairman Harvey opened the public hearing, and seeing no one come forward, Chairman Harvey closed the hearing.

(a) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved to Finally Adopt Ordinance No. 12,062, authorizing issuance, sale and delivery of Sales Tax Revenue Refunding Bonds, Series 2021, of the City of Monroe, State of Louisiana, all in the manner provided for by Title 39 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950, as amended, and other constitutional and statutory authority supplemental thereto; and providing for other matters in connection therewith. (Admin.) (There were no public comments)

Mrs. Ezernack made a request before Agenda Item B public hearing opened to remove in that Ordinance, Item (k); Mrs. Sturdivant said it would need to be moved to strike the proposed language in section k and approve as submitted. Ms. Woods asked what happens when bringing it back; Mrs. Sturdivant said it would go back through the introduction, and final adoption stages.

Open Public Hearing/Public Comment/Close Hearing: Chairman Harvey opened the public hearing:

1. Mr. Stanley Smalls asked how the tax proceeds would be allocated; Mrs. Rowell said it was already allocated to capital funds, and employee benefit funds to cover insurance costs.

Seeing no one else come forward, Chairman Harvey closed the hearing.

(b) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved to Finally Adopt Ordinance No. 12,063, amending Chapter 10.5 Section 23 of the Monroe City Code Entitled "Electronic Video Bingo Machines" and further providing with respect thereto. (Woods) (This item was tabled at the last meeting.)

Comments: Mrs. Ezernack asked to schedule meetings with Mrs. Rowell to get more information on how it works. Ms. Woods said she wanted to see a couple years of information.

Open Public Hearing/Public Comment/Close Hearing: Chairman Harvey opened the public hearing, and seeing no one come forward, Chairman Harvey closed the hearing.

(c) Upon a motion by Mr. Marshall, second by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved to Finally Adopt Ordinance No. 12,064, declaring certain immovable property in Monroe bearing municipal address 908 Rogers St. as no longer being needed for public use and authorizing the same to be sold to Mayland's Investments, Karen Mayfield and Brittany Mayfield, pursuant to Louisiana Revised Statute 33:4712, and further providing with respect thereto. (Legal) (There were no public comments)

Open Public Hearing/Public Comment/Close Hearing: Chairman Harvey opened the public hearing, and seeing no one come forward, Chairman Harvey closed the hearing.

(d) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved to Finally Adopt Ordinance No. 12,065, declaring certain immovable property in Monroe bearing municipal address 910 North 9th St. as no longer being needed for public use and authorizing the same to be sold to Wolf Development LLC, pursuant to Louisiana Revised Statute 33:4712, and further providing with respect thereto. (Legal) (There were no public comments)

CITIZENS PARTICIPATION:

1. Mr. Stanley Smalls spoke regarding Monroe Transit Union and transit employee raises.
2. Mr. Verbon Muhammad spoke regarding the youth league, MCAL, Monroe City Academy League.
3. Mrs. Jessica Hollins, MCAL, spoke regarding their Monroe City Academy League and programs for youth.
4. Mr. Tyree Hollins, MCAL, spoke regarding the Monroe City Academy League.
5. Mr. Gleron Fleming, spoke regarding the (MCAL) Monroe City Academy League.
6. Mr. Stonewall Hunter, spoke regarding the (MCAL) Monroe City Academy League.
7. Mr. Joseph Byrd, spoke regarding the MCAL Monroe City Academy League.

(Dialogue was made with some Council members, City staff, and individuals speaking on behalf of MCAL; another meeting with MCAL and City officials is scheduled in the near future).

8. Mr. George Decuir, spoke regarding Monroe Transit Union and employee raises.

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 7:36 p.m., upon a motion of Mrs. Ezernack and seconded by Mrs. Dawson. (There were no public comments)

Mr. Douglas Harvey
Council Chairman

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.**