

Monroe City Council Legal and Regular Session  
March 09, 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, March 09, 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 Mrs. Dawson's designee, Rev. King Dawson, Pastor of New Macedonia Baptist Church, and the Pledge of Allegiance by Mrs. Dawson.

COMMUNICATIONS & SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. Mr. Harvey welcomed each one present and introduced the new Airport Director, Mr. Charles Butcher.
2. Mrs. Ezernack welcomed and thanked each one for being present.
3. Ms. Woods welcomed and thanked each one for coming out; she thanked the Public Works department for their efforts in trash pickup; she announced a cleanup for her district scheduled for March 27, 10am-12noon they will be cleaning up Renwick, Louberta and Powell; she congratulated Mrs. Edie Louise Davis, Executive Administrator for Mary Goss Nursing Home, this is an African American owned business; she commented about the continued driving of the 18 wheelers in the Elm Street neighborhood area and the danger that it poses to the community; she thanked the Community Affairs department and the lighting for Carroll High School baseball field at Marble Recreation Center, the lights were shot out and replaced, then they were shot out again; she appealed to the community to stop shooting the lights out and to have a desire to make the neighborhood enjoyable. Those that are caught shooting out the lights will be pursued.
4. Mr. Marshall commented regarding the speeding on the Southside and thanked Chief Zordan for his assistance. He encouraged citizens to think outside the box and that he will always look to find solutions to problems.
5. Mrs. Dawson thanked each one for being a part of the meeting; she thanked the volunteers for their assistance with the District 5 cleanup, including Ouachita Green, Keep Monroe Beautiful, Community Affairs Department where they cleanup in the areas of King Oaks and Trichell neighborhoods; she asked that citizens not litter and to assist by taking trash to a dumpster/trash can. Mrs. Dawson said she would be joining Ms. Woods for her cleanup and will also bring volunteers. She thanked the Community Affairs department for their work in her district and there will be a video on Facebook this week detailing that information.
6. Mayor Ellis thanked Council and Ms. Woods, as the City has put lights on the ball fields for the first time ever and there is new paint on the courts, and they are dressing up the community centers; much of the equipment have been donated by community members and thanked them for wanting to make it better. He thanked Council members for their continued cleanups. The City of Monroe has a cleanup crew that have picked up 6500 industrial bags of trash within several months and they are continuing to cleanup the areas. He thanked everyone for their help in making Monroe a beautiful and clean city. He thanked St. Francis for including the City and working together to put out a Covid public service announcement; Read across America allowed him to read at three local schools along with Chief Williams and Mrs. Sturdivant, and he encouraged the students to write to the Council, the Mayor and tell them what they would like to see in their communities. He thanked ULM Dental for partnering with Community Affairs where 50 kids took part in a dental event with ULM Dental students. He thanked City employee, DJ Fortenberry, a former pitcher for ULM who worked with Community affairs to get the ball fields in order; the coaches at Carroll and Wossman High School expressed the need for gloves, balls, and bats to practice with and the ULM coaches stepped up and donated baseball gear to the two schools.

Mr. Charles Butcher, Airport Director introduced himself and look forward to meeting and working with each one.

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Upon a motion of Ms. Woods and a second by Mr. Marshall, the minutes of the Legal and Regular session of February 23, 2021 and the Legal and Special Session of the Budget Meeting of February 22, 2021 were unanimously approved. (There were no public comments).

PRESENTATION: NONE.

PUBLIC HEARINGS: NONE.

PROPOSED CONDEMNATIONS: Public Comment:

1. 115 Egan Street (D4) (Owners - Charles Smith, Jr.) (OPPJ - non-curator) Upon a motion by Mr. Marshall, second by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved for property owner to be given 30 days or April 10, 2021, in which to bring the structure into compliance with the code or demolish the structure and clean the lot. (There were no public comments).

Comments: Pictorial evidence of the current state of the property and discussion on the property's condition were presented by PUD Director, Ellen Hill.

2. 211 Mays Drive (D5) (Owners Ray D & Claudette Jones) Upon a motion by Mrs. Dawson, second by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved for property owner to be given 30 days or April 10, 2021, in which to bring the structure into compliance with the code or demolish the structure and clean the lot. (There were no public comments).

Comments: Pictorial evidence of the current state of the property and discussion on the property's condition were presented by PUD Director, Ellen Hill.

3. 2707 Lee Avenue (D4) (Owner - Kenneth Blankenship) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved for item to be removed from the agenda. (There were no public comments).

Comments: PUD Director, Ellen Hill commented that the item was being removed due to it being demolished by property owner.

ACCEPTANCE OR REJECTION OF BIDS: Public Comment None.

RESOLUTIONS AND MINUTE ENTRIES:

Council: Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Ms. Woods, second by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7910, nominating Ivan Thomas to the Downtown Economic Development District Board and further providing with respect thereto. (Woods) (There were no public comments).

Comments: Ms. Woods thanked Mr. Thomas for agreeing to volunteer to serve the community.

(b) Upon a motion by Mrs. Dawson, second by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7911, approving the appointment of Donald Johnson to the Board of Directors of the I-20 Economic Development Commission, and further providing with respect thereto. (Harvey) (There were no public comments).

(c) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to remove from the agenda to adopt a Resolution appointing William Krutzer to the Monroe Capital Infrastructure Commission, and further providing with respect thereto. (Harvey) (There were no public comments).

Department of Administration: Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7912, authorizing the City of Monroe, Parish of Ouachita, State of Louisiana to incur debt and to issue not to exceed Twelve Million Dollars (\$12,000,000) aggregate principal amount of taxable or tax-exempt Sales Tax Revenue Refunding Bonds, in one or more series; making application to the State Bond Commission; and otherwise providing with respect thereto.

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Comments: Mr. Thompson of Government Consultants explained the purpose of agenda item is to allow the city to make an application to the State bond commission. Mr. Ken Antee thanked the Council and Mayor for allowing them to work for the City to bring good savings.

Department of Planning & Urban Development: Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Mr. Marshall, second by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved to Consider request from Credell Scott for a Major Conditional Use Permit authorizing the use of the location at (910 S. 4<sup>th</sup> Street) to operate as Transitional Housing. The Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance allows Transitional Housing as a Major Conditional Use in the R-4, High Density Multi-Family District. Major Conditional Uses are those uses that require another level of approval; therefore, this request comes before the City Council for their approval in addition to that of the Planning Commission.

Comments: Mrs. Ezernack inquired of Ms. Poret if they had received any comments for this item from the community; Ms. Poret said they had not gotten any response from the public, as they did send out letters and advertised. Mr. Credell explained his transitional housing program and a description of the house which is located at 910 South 4<sup>th</sup> Street and their target clients would be assisting veterans and others; those who need shelter, and services will be provided to help meet their needs. Ms. Woods commented there was a program at the community college for veterans that could assist them with life skills. Mr. Marshall thanked Mr. Scott for his efforts.

Legal Department: Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Ms. Woods, second by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7913, Rescinding Resolution Number 7896 and stating the City of Monroe's endorsement of Miller Roy Development, LLC, and their Project #20200312-RTA to participate in the benefits of the Louisiana Restoration Tax Abatement Program. (There were no public comments).

(b) Upon a motion by Mr. Harvey, second by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7914, approving the appointment of Aimee Kane to the board for the Downtown Economic Development District (DEDD) and further providing with respect thereto. (Chamber Appointment) (There were no public comments).

Comments: Ms. Woods asked about the boards and needed lists and there was a list submitted for this board.

Mayor's Office: Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7915, authorizing Stacey Rowell to enter into a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement with Ouachita Green and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments).

(b) Upon a motion by Mr. Marshall, second by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7916, authorizing Stacey Rowell to sign and accept a \$61,500 Grant from the Convention and Visitors Bureau for Christmas at the Civic Center and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments).

(c) Upon a motion by Mrs. Dawson, second by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7917, authorizing Stacey Rowell to sign and accept a \$403,000 Grant from the Convention and Visitors Bureau for Phase 1 of Louisiana Purchase Garden and Zoo Master-Plan and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments).

Comments: Mr. Harvey thanked the CVB for the grant.

(d) Upon a motion by Mr. Marshall, second by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7918, authorizing the City of Monroe to enter into an Agreement with Plugged In Creative for Professional Services and further providing with respect thereto.

Comments: Mrs. Sturdivant stated \$24, 500 has already been received for sponsorship.

Mr. Andy Chasson, owner of Plugged in Creative commented they would be producing the State of the City, a virtual event this year due primarily to Covid. A new way of communicating from the City to the Public in a way that is inclusive, and compelling and motivating the citizen's involvement in the City. Mr. Harvey stated it would be televised on several networks. Mayor Ellis commented this was a way for citizens to be involved and into

community members homes, and also to market Monroe to our region to let them know what we have going on, where we are today and where the city is headed.

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. 7919, authorizing Stacey Rowell to enter into and execute Work Authorization #11 between the City of Monroe and Garver, L.L.C., related to the Airport Drainage Project at the Monroe Regional Airport and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments).

Comments: Tom Janway, Public works explained the drainage project and this item to be all the remaining drainage work including drainage structure rehab, resizing and a multiplicity of other things.

(b) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7920, authorizing Change Order No. 2 in connection with the work on the administration office at the WPCC by Benchmark Construction Group of La, LLC, for a sixty-nine day increase in the contract time and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments).

(c) Upon a motion by Mr. Marshall, second by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved to Consider request from the WPCC, a Division of the Public Works Department, for Council approval to advertise for bids for repairs to the Secondary Clarifier #1 located at WPCC. Funds for these repairs will come from Repairs and Maintenance Account, which has a balance of \$595,021. (There were no public comments).

Department of Community Affairs: Public Comment: None.

Police Department: Public Comment: None.

Fire Department: Public Comment: None.

Engineering Services: Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Mrs. Dawson, second by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7921, accepting as substantially complete work done by and between the City of Monroe and Alpha Service and Products, Inc., for the Guardrail Replacement Project, and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments).

(b) Upon a motion by Ms. Woods, second by Mrs. Ezernack and approved; Voting YES: Harvey, Ezernack, Dawson; Voting NO: Woods, Marshall to Adopt Resolution No. 7922, authorizing an authorized city representative to advertise for bids on the WTP Expansion & Renovations Project. The estimated cost of this project is \$47,778,000.00. The DBE Goal is 16.7% and source of funds Water Capital Funds and Capital Infrastructure Sales Tax Revenue Funds.

Comments:

Ms. Augusta Turner commented regarding the 16.7 per cent DBE goal; Ms. Golden explained the process as arriving at the entire scope of the project. Ms. Golden explained that the City in the past had already advertised for bids on this project and the City only received one bid, it was rejected by previous Council due to it being outside of the available funds and other things. Mr. Marshall asked about the marketing of the project; Ms. Golden explained that by public bid law, there is a requirement for advertising and the Engineering department make sure the process is in compliance with the public bid law and separate from that the City has chosen to have the MAPP program and there is another part of the City, not the Engineering department that is in touch with DBE and it has outreach activities for DBE's and they are the most likely to be able to market to the DBE's. She said this project and all projects are taken to that committee, not just to confirm the goal, but so that the committee knows what projects are coming up and then have the information they need to market and do the outreach. When the project first went out for bids there were two City sponsored workshops, and contractors, subcontractors and DBE's were all invited to come. Mr. Marshall asked if there would be a workshop for this project; Ms. Golden said she was not sure what the MAPP program was planning to do, but the Engineering Department will be doing what the task is as far as complying with the bid law.

Ms. Turner continued discussions about the project and asked for a feasibility study and there are local contractors certified and asked that this agenda item would be passed over and the community get educated for the \$48,000,000 project to have more local people involved and the money to remain in the City.

Mrs. Dawson asked legal how long does the community have to respond/submit once the request for bids is put out and advertised. Mrs. Sturdivant said the date was April 28 and anyone can bid on the project. Ms. Golden said under the bid law, they have to advertise for 30 days and the City is giving them 45 days because of the size of the project. If the item is passed tonight, then they will advertise and anyone including DBE's can bid on the project. Mrs. Ezernack asked if this goes out for bids, if the prime contractors, the larger contractors would have access and understand that they need to go to the DOTD website to seek out the qualified people who can fill them; Ms. Golden said it is in the advertisement that there is a DBE goal requirement.

Ms. Woods asked if the 16.7 percent DBE goal go up once the project starts; Mrs. Rowell said yes, a higher percentage could be achieved.

Ms. Rowell explained that the City has already been through this process one time and contractors felt at one time they could not achieve the 20 percent and they bow out and Ms. Golden said they did not achieve the 20 percent. Ms. Woods said since it has been 20 years, that she feels it need to be evaluated again. Mr. Benton, Water Treatment commented this project has been on the board for almost 15 years and it is overdue. He has worked with DBE's and they do excellent work, but in North Louisiana and in Ouachita parish there is a lack of additional qualified DBE's. There is not enough community outreach that deal with community members, the university and have met with them to get small minority businesses to the table to do business with Monroe water.

The Monroe water department presented a workshop on getting businesses involved and do support moving this project forward. Mrs. Sturdivant commented that the City has the MAPP program, the DBE committee and there have been several seminars were reached out to potential DBE's over the years in hopes of getting more people certified as a DBE. Some of those interested in becoming a DBE do not complete the lengthy process of becoming certified to make the pool larger. The City tries to provide all of the resources possible for the citizens to become certified and have been doing this but have not had great results of people becoming certified after the seminars. Mr. Benton said the DBE certification is normally a six month process and the shortest is 3 months. Mr. Marshall asked if another seminar could be presented to include the DBE's that were mentioned by Ms. Turner. Mr. Benton said he did not see a problem with hosting another seminar. Mayor Ellis commented there are federal programs that will match the contractor to their bond. Mayor Ellis asked Ms. Turner if he could set up a meeting with her and the SBA at ULM. She said she has been there. Mr. Benton said contractors should be held accountable of meeting the DBE goals. Mrs. Ezernack commented about the strain on the water system and recent difficulty of allowing the pressure to drop down to a certain pressure to make sure everyone was getting water. Mr. Benton explained the strain on the plant and mentioned the past instances of the strain on the plant, and a lot of the parts in the system is obsolete.

Mr. Mike McClanahan, Baton Rouge NAACP commented about the awarding of prime contractors and awarding contracts to minorities.

Mr. Mikiel Sharkull, local developer, commented regarding the project and suggested there be thought about the main contractor and to place stipulations and getting the job done.

Mrs. Sonja Jacobs, local consultant, commented regarding the DBE program.

Discussions continued on the project and votes taken.

(c) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7923, authorizing an authorized city representative, to execute Change Order No. Two (2) to the Water Distribution System Improvements Contract, between the City of Monroe and Jabar Corporation, for an increase in the contract time of 58 days and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments).

(d) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7924, authorizing an authorized city representative, to execute Change Order No. Two (2) to the US 165 Turn Lanes at Venable and Venable Lane Reconstruction Contract, between the City of Monroe and Amethyst Construction, Inc., for an increase in the contract time of 22 days and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments).

(e) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7925, authorizing an authorized city representative, to execute Change Order No. Two (2) to the Texas Sewer Lift Station Bar Screen Replacement contract, between the City of Monroe and Dixie Overland Construction, LLC, for a decrease in the construction cost of \$17,405.00 and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments).

(f) Upon a motion by Mrs. Dawson, second by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7926, authorizing an authorized city representative, to execute Change Order No. one (1) to the Guardrail Replacement Contract, between the City of Monroe and Alpha Service & Products, Inc., for a decrease in the contract amount of \$12,275.00 and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments).

(g) Upon a motion by Mr. Marshall, second by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7927, authorizing Friday Ellis, Mayor, to enter into and execute a Professional Services Agreement with RCH Company, Inc., to provide Engineering Services for the Enhancement Project on Desiard Street S.P.N. – H.009752 and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments).

(h) Upon a motion by Mr. Marshall, second by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7928, authorizing an authorized city representative, to enter into and execute a contract with New Edge Services, LLC, to provide support GIS Services and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments).

(i) Upon a motion by Mr. Marshall, second by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7929, authorizing Friday Ellis, Mayor, or authorized representative of the City of Monroe to sign and execute documents relating to the Louisiana Watershed Initiative Round 1 Grants and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments).

Comments: Ms. Golden explained the project and presented a map showing the benefitted areas.

BREAK IF NEEDED:

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS & ORDINANCES:

Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance adopting a Budget of Revenues and providing for an estimate of items and expenditures for the fiscal year 2021-2022. (Admin.) (There were no public comments).

(b) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance adopting a Capital Improvements Program for the City of Monroe and providing for a detailed statement of the contents for a Five (5) year period from May 1, 2021 to April 30, 2026. (Admin.) (There were no public comments).

Comments: Ms. Woods asked if there was a copy of the five year plan; Mr. Harvey and Mrs. Rowell said it was in their binders.

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, the hearing was closed.

(a) Upon a motion by Mrs. Dawson, second by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved to Finally adopt Ordinance No. 12,043, amending Section 15-16 Section (a), and deleting Sub Sections (1) and (2), of Chapter 15 Entitled “Fire Prevention and Protection”, of the City of Monroe Code and further providing with respect thereto. (Fire Dept.) (There were no public comments).

CITIZENS PARTICIPATION:

1. Mr. Marty Campbell, SEDD Chairman, commented that SEDD is looking forward to having a relationship with the Mayor and Council in moving the City forward and are excited about the things that are to come.

2. Chipps Taylor, Full Gospel International Baptist Fellowship, thanked Ms. Woods for assisting her with getting a truckload of 19 pallets of water out to the community during the snowstorm. Ms. Woods thanked the organization for the water.

3. Rev. Ambrose Douzart, Chapter President NAACP, thanked everyone for the prayers on the loss of his Mother; he commented regarding the SEDD board operating without a quorum and the two names being submitted by the African American Chamber to get them approved. Mr. Harvey said there was a submission of the list and the feedback was there was a list for the SEDD appointments to pick from and there were two lists with two nominations, so the request was made to have at least one more so that the Council members that are to make the

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appointments have more to choose from; this afternoon a letter was received that had 3 names and it is a list to pick from at this stage and does not see any reason as to why it will not be on the next agenda. Rev. Douzart said they are operating without a quorum, and this is illegal.

4. Mr. Marty Campbell commented he wanted to clear up misinformation as to how SEDD operates and stated that whenever they do have a quorum, they do have the 4 out of 7 board members that are required. There are two seats appointed by the African American Chamber of Commerce and there has to be a list per seat and you cannot just submit names, and this is what has not been submitted; SEDD is trying to do things right, so that there is no legal battle of doing things wrong.

5. Mr. Anthony Merrrells, local event organizer, inquired about the Covid requirements for hosting public events.

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 8:28 p.m., upon a motion of Ms. Woods and seconded by Mrs. Ezernack. (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.**