

Monroe City Council Legal and Regular Session
May 11, 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, May 11, 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 Ms. Woods designee, Rev. Lenard Montgomery (Sr. Pastor, New Faith Missionary Baptist Church) and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Ms. Woods.

COMMUNICATIONS & SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. Mr. Harvey welcomed and thanked everyone for attending tonight's meeting.
2. Mrs. Ezernack welcomed and thanked everyone for attending tonight's meeting and she thanked Rev. Montgomery for the prayer. She toured the Monroe fire station no. 5 and thanked them for an up to date station and it will serve the community well.
3. Ms. Woods welcomed all for being present as well as those watching on social media. She thanked Public Works, Mr. Janway, Ms. Gospel and also Mayor Ellis for the mowing that took place on Saturday. She has a cleanup on May 22, 2021, 10am-12pm at the Powell Community Center. She asked if someone is seen dumping to report it to the police or call her. She expressed her sincere condolences to the family of Mr. David Harris.
4. Mr. Marshall welcomed everyone for being present and those watching along on social media and for showing their concern for City issues. He spoke about illegal dumping and his witnessing someone unloading trash; he did report it to Ms. Hill and MPD. There will be other measures put in place to deter illegal dumping and he thanked Ms. Hill for her efforts. There will be a Juneteenth celebration on June 19th beginning at Wossman High School contact Ms. Marie Brown for more information. The trip to Baton Rouge for them was beneficial and Mrs. Ezernack's knowledge on how to grow the community was beneficial.
5. Mrs. Dawson welcomed each one present; she expressed her condolences to the David Harris family, as one of his son's mother works for her and that she has kept in contact with the family; Mrs. Dawson stated there has been violent crimes in the City and it's coming from young people in their teens and twenties, and she asked that the community would talk with the children, guide and mentor them as to why it's not good, or healthy and the consequences from this behavior and do believe that Monroe can and will do better. The trip to Baton Rouge was an eye opening experience and seeing how the people in Baton Rouge have come together to combat crime and make things happen; it would be good to see Monroe come together, because there is still a big divide. She thanked Public Works for their efforts and the city leaders for getting things done for the City.
6. Mayor Ellis welcomed and thanked all for attending; Mayor Ellis attended meeting in Baton Rouge and also seeing the Council in Baton Rouge and meeting with folks to hear the needs of Monroe; he congratulated Chief Williams on the new fire station, it is very modern. He commented about the growth and expansion of St. Francis downtown; he took his executive staff to Baton Rouge to meet with the Baton Rouge area foundation and met with the Baton Rouge housing authority and listened to their inspiring master plan. National Day of Prayer was held and prayer leaders from the community were present; The Mayor's Cup will be held on May 21, 2021, a four person scramble and it will provide scholarships to two year technical college degrees/certificates and to four year universities and for more information, contact Micheli Martin at City Hall. He thanked Council members for their level of commitment to the citizens.

Upon a motion of Mrs. Ezernack and a second by Mrs. Dawson, the minutes of the Legal and Regular session of April 27, 2021 were unanimously approved. (There were no public comments).

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PRESENTATION: NONE.

PUBLIC HEARINGS: NONE.

PROPOSED CONDEMNATIONS: Public Comment:

1. 408 North 25th Street (D2) (Evelyn Burrell c/o the estate of Evelyn Burrell, Lavargne Gunn)(Non-curator - OPPJ) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved for property owner to be given 30 days or June 12, 2021, in which to bring the structure into compliance with the code or demolish the structure and clean the lot.

Comments: Mrs. Hill commented they have been working on this property since 2018-2019 and the structure is open and presents a challenge to the neighborhood and has not improved. There was initial contact in 2018 and since then, there has been no contact and none of the recommended items to save the house have been done. Mrs. Hill recommended condemnation.

Mrs. Ezernack stated the property was in her district and moved for condemnation.

Public Comments: Elizabeth Gunn Ford, commented that the property belonged to her aunt and her mother who passed last year, and any communications sent to her were sent to her when she was ill and her mother was not physically able to do anything; Ms. Ford commented that she was not living in the area at the time, but is currently in the area and will do those things needed to take care of and would need more than 30 days.

Mrs. Ezernack stated that the property had been adjudicated into the City; Mrs. Sturdivant commented that was correct and looking back to 2008, the taxes had not been paid and it should be thousands at this time.

2. 404 Hippolyte Avenue (D4) (E. L. Hilton, Herbert B & Alma Ethel Trim) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to remove item from the agenda. (There were no public comments).

ACCEPTANCE OR REJECTION OF BIDS: Public Comment NONE.

RESOLUTIONS AND MINUTE ENTRIES:

Council: Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7967, granting an exception to the Open Container Ordinance to the Chennault Golf Course (Mayor's Cup-Charity Golf Tournament) 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 a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7968, granting an exception to the Open Container Ordinance to the Twin City Art Foundation (Exhibition Reception for Letitia Huckaby: Parish) 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 a motion by Mrs. Dawson, second by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7969, authorizing Proworks Productions, LLC to provide Video and Television Professional Services for the Monroe City Council, and further providing with respect thereto. (Harvey) (There were no public comments).

Department of Administration: Public Comment: None.

Department of Planning & Urban Development: Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7970, authorizing Friday Ellis, Mayor, permission to substantial amend the FY 2019 Annual Action Plan & FY 2020-2024 Consolidated Plan to expend round 3 of CDBG Coronavirus Aid, Relief & Economic Security (CARES) Act Funding to address health and safety concerns related to COVID 19 activities in the amount of \$383,763.00 from the CDBG CARES Act Funding, and further providing with respect thereto.

Comments: Mrs. Hill explained the item was funding from the Cares Act; this agenda item is for doing an amendment to the action plan and following HUD's guidelines. Ms. Downs explained the components of the amendment with the information that PUD shared with Council including Covid related issues, a Transit bus shelter project, replacing trash receptacles, lighting, and benches at various locations, hosting health fairs, a mobile library, and mobile activity center and various community centers, and minor rehab projects that relate to raw sewage, ventilation to improve the quality of life, and administrative fees. Mrs. Ezernack asked if the mobile libraries would be done in conjunction with the public libraries; Ms. Downs said the logistics of working the mobile libraries are still being worked on and will be partnering with local libraries. Community Affairs representative commented they would be partnering with local libraries. The locations of the bus shelters totaled six and were named.

Mr. Stanley Smalls, Amalgamated Transit Union, asked which category what was the CDBG? Mrs. Hill explained the HUD guidelines.

(b) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved to Consider request from Shanedra Carter for a Major Conditional Use Permit for Victory Truth Temple that authorizes the use of the location (304 Texas) to operate as a House of Worship. The Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance allows a House of Worship as a Major Conditional Use in the B-3, General Business/Commercial 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. (There were no public comments).

Legal Department: Public Comment: None.

Mayor's Office: Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7971, approving the appointment of Chap Breard to the Monroe Capital Infrastructure Commission and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments).

Department of Public Works: Public Comment: None.

Department of Community Affairs: Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7972, authorizing a designated city representative to execute Change Order Number 2 (Masur Museum of Art Storm Damage Repairs) between the City of Monroe and Grindstone Construction LLC for a \$2,900 increase in the contract amount and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments).

Police Department: Public Comment: None.

Fire Department: Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7973, authorizing Stacey Rowell, Director of Administration on behalf of the Monroe Fire Department to execute an Act of Substantial Completion to the Breard/Betin St. Fire Station #5 Contract. (There were no public comments).

Comments: Chief Terry Williams, MFD, explained the progress on the fire station. Informational handouts were given to each Councilmember and a Power Point presentation was presented.

(b) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7974, authorizing Stacey Rowell, Director of Administration on behalf of the Monroe Fire Department to execute Change Order No. Four (4) to the Breard/Betin St. Fire Station #5 Contract. (There were no public comments).

Engineering Services: Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Mrs. Dawson, second by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7975, accepting as substantially complete work done by and between the City of Monroe and Womack & Construction Group, Inc., for the H.013937 Kansas Lane Extension Clearing & Grubbing Project, 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. 7976, authorizing an authorized city representative, to execute Change Order No. Three (3) to the Water Distribution System Improvements Contract, between the City of Monroe and Jabar Corporation, for an increase in the contract time of 32 days and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments).

(c) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7977, authorizing an authorized city representative, to execute Change Order No. Two (2) to the repairs to Bayou Bartholomew Pump & Motor No. 1 Contract, between the City of Monroe and Womack & Sons Construction Group, Inc., for an increase in the contact amount of \$1,982.95 and an increase in the contract time of 67 days and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments).

(d) Upon a motion by Mrs. Dawson, second by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7978, authorizing an authorized city representative, to enter into and execute a Professional Services Agreement with Quaternary Resource Investigations, LLC (QRI), to provide Surveying Services with GPR of certain structures along the Ouachita River and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments).

BREAK IF NEEDED:

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS & ORDINANCES: Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance adopting the Authorized Millage Rate(s) and providing for the Levying of Special and General Taxes for the City of Monroe for the year 2021. (Admin.) (There were no public comments).

Comments: Mrs. Stacy Rowell stated that it was the same millage.

(b) Upon a motion by Ms. Woods, second by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance amending Chapter 10.5 Section 23 of the Monroe City Code Entitled "Electronic Video Bingo Machines" and further providing with respect thereto. (Woods) (There were no public comments).

(c) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance 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).

(d) Upon a motion by Ms. Woods, second by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance authorizing the City of Monroe to take corporeal possession of the property described below and sell to Charles Wilson, Jr. all rights, title, and interest that the City may have acquired to the Lot 4, Square 3, Edwards Addition, Ouachita Parish, 2806 Coolidge St., District 3, Monroe, La, by Adjudication at Tax Sale dated July 1, 2011, and further with respect thereto. (Legal) (There were no public comments).

(e) Upon a motion by Mr. Marshall, second by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance authorizing the City of Monroe to take corporeal possession of the property described below and sell to Shirley Dunn all rights, title, and interest that the City may have acquired to the Lot 14, Square 95, D. A. Breard Sr.'s Addition, Ouachita Parish, 1515 Breard St., District 3, Monroe, La, by Adjudication at Tax Sale dated August 1, 2014, and further with respect thereto. (Legal) (There were no public comments).

(f) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance 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).

(g) Upon a motion by Mr. Marshall, second by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance adopting and amending the Zoning Map for the City of Monroe, Louisiana and authorizing the Clerk to publish notice of a Public Hearing to rezone a ±9-acre tract of land located in Ouachita Parish from B-3, General Business/Commercial to B-1, Neighborhood Mixed Use District in order for the applicant to be able to develop the area with residential lots and a commercial strip - **301 Plum Street (All of Square 27 and Square 28 of Ouachita Mills Second Addition) – APPLICANT: Cedrick Hemphill - (P&Z)** (There were no public comments).

(h) Upon a motion by Mrs. Dawson, second by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance contracting the boundaries of the City of Monroe, Louisiana, providing for the recordation of the entire boundary as amended: establishing the effective date thereof, and providing further with respect thereto – Applicant – City of Monroe. (P&Z) (There were no public comments).

Add-On: (i) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to add to the agenda to Introduce an Ordinance authorizing the City of Monroe to acquire full ownership interest of the property described as Lot 12, Sq. 4 Maupins Locks & Dams Addn, and South 45 ft on Nichols St., bearing municipal address 3514 Lee Ave., Monroe, LA. By adjudication at tax sale dated June 24, 2015, and further with respect thereto. (There were no public comments).

Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance authorizing the City of Monroe to acquire full ownership interest of the property described as Lot 12, Sq. 4 Maupins Locks & Dams Addn, and South 45 ft on Nichols St., bearing municipal address 3514 Lee Ave., Monroe, LA. By adjudication at tax sale dated June 24, 2015, and further with respect thereto. (There were no public comments).

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

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

(a) Upon a motion by Mr. Marshall, second by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved to Finally Adopt Ordinance No. 12,052, adopting and amending the Zoning Map for the City of Monroe, Louisiana to zone a ±4.4-acre tract of land located in Ouachita Parish from B-1, Neighborhood Mixed Use District to B-2, Neighbor Business District in order for the applicant to be able to develop the area with uses such as full-service restaurants and multi-family housing..**1203 and 1207 DeSiard Street, 700-716 Adams Street, 709 Adams Street, 1212 Washington Street, and Lots 1-4, Square 40 Filhiols First Addition – APPLICANT: Michael Echols and City of Monroe – (P&Z)** (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.

(b) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved to Finally Adopt Ordinance No. 12,053, declaring certain immovable property in the Monroe Air Industrial Park as not being needed for public use and authorizing the same to be sold at private sale to the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development pursuant to Louisiana Revised Statute 33:4712, and further providing with respect thereto. (Legal) (There were no public comments).

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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 Ms. Woods, second by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved to Finally Adopt Ordinance No. 12,054, authorizing the exchange of property between the City of Monroe and Scott Equipment Sales Company L.L.C. pursuant to La. R. S. 33:4712 and further providing with respect thereto. (Legal) (There were no public comments).

(d) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to Finally Adopt an Emergency Ordinance No. 12,055, declaring the condition of the Texas to Standifer Sewer Trunk Line at the intersection of Standifer and Gordon an Emergency necessitating demolition, bypass and repair or replacement and other repairs further providing with respect thereto. (Eng. Dept) (There were no public comments).

CITIZENS PARTICIPATION:

1. Mr. Verbon Muhammad, spoke in reference to the death of Mr. David Harris and the refusal to release the police body cameras, along with the investigation. He read Proverbs 31:8-9 and Exodus 22:1-3.
2. Mr. Stanley Smalls, Amalgamated Transit Union, spoke regarding local union meetings and support for the Union employees and their working conditions. He also spoke about the city's contract with First Transit.
3. Mr. Eugene Payne, a retired member of Amalgamated Transit Union No. 1160; he congratulated Mrs. Dawson and Council members on winning their respective districts; he spoke regarding First Transit and their contract not being renewed previously due to their treatment of the employees and the continued treatment. There are questions regarding First Transit, and they want answers.
4. Mr. Odell Jones, frequent bus rider expressed his concerns of enjoying riding the bus and the drivers are doing a great job and the things they deal with on a daily basis and want the drivers to be treated fairly.
5. Mr. Tobias Collins, spoke regarding his concerns of city transportation and having to walk four minutes to the bus stops and the bus stops being moved.

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 7:09 p.m., upon a motion of Mr. Marshall 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.**