

City Hall, Monroe, Louisiana
November 22, 2022
6:00p.m.

There was a legal and regular session of the City Council of the City of Monroe, Louisiana held this date at the Council's regular meeting place, the Council Chamber, City Hall Building, Monroe, Louisiana.

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. She said during this time to keep Councilman Doug Harvey in your prayers as he was involved in a major car accident.

The Invocation was led by Pastor Edward Taylor.

Communications & Special Announcements:

Mrs. Ezernack wished everyone a safe and Happy Thanksgiving with family and friends.

Ms. Woods thanked everyone for coming out and she said the Council will try not to keep them long. She yielded her time to Ms. Kenya Roberson, Executive Director of the Monroe Regional Black Chamber of Commerce.

Ms. Roberson said she appreciates Ms. Woods for yielding her time because her concerns will take a little longer than three minutes. She stated she received an email from Mr. Rick Saulsberry, Vice Chairman, in reference to the Southside Small Business Meet and Greet on November 29, 2022. She said when she received the information, she thought it was a strategic type meeting until she saw the flyer. She further stated the flyer stated the City of Monroe and the Monroe Chamber of Commerce will be hosting this event, it frustrated her. She said it made her angry for several reasons and she said she has come before the City numerous of times asking for the Black Chamber to be included. She said she doesn't know what else she can do as the Executive Director to ask that the Black Chamber be included. She said maybe the City doesn't know what inclusion means. She noted inclusion means the act of including and include means to take in compromise to compile. She said she doesn't know why there is a disconnect and she further noted the Southside Economic Development Board wasn't even invited which is an easy fix. She addressed the Council by asking why not send a communication to say has the Black Chamber of Commerce been included.

Mr. Marshall said good evening to everyone, and he wanted to thank everyone who came out to Ease on Down to Healthcare. He said the event was changed from Lida-Benton Park to Emily P. Robinson and they had a great time. He said the Council and the Administration just returned from Kansas City where they attended the National League of Cities and he said they gained a lot of knowledge. He said in response to Ms. Roberson concerns they would have a conversation with her after the Council meeting. On another note, Mr. Marshall asked for prayers for his sister who is at St. Francis Medical Hospital battling stage 4 cancer.

Mrs. Dawson noted Monroe Parks Master Plan Community Meetings will be held on Tuesday November 29, 2022, at Forsythe Park and Wednesday November 30, 2022, at Charles Johnson Park. She said people will be able to share their ideas, hot cocoa, movie in the park, and a special appearance from Santa. She said the public engagement activities start from 4pm until 5pm and the movies begin at 6pm. She stated Santa's Christmas Village starts at the Children's Museum December 1st through December 23rd and advanced ticketing are available on December 4th. She stated admission will be paused for 30 minutes between sessions on December 10th and she further stated reservation can be made at nelcm.org. On another note, she said there will be a community meeting to talk about the redistricting of Monroe City on Tuesday December 6th at 6pm at the Monroe Public Safety Center. She noted if you have questions about the redistricting, you can come ask questions and see how the map will be laid out. She said the map will be voted on at the December Council meeting.

Mr. Jimmie Bryant, Chief Operating Officer, setting in for Mayor Ellis said the Mayor sends his regards to Councilman Doug Harvey and his family. He said the Mayor wanted to thank

the participants and donors who gave to the turkey giveaway on November 21, 2022. He said they will be able to feed at least 160 families this Thanksgiving holiday. He stated there are more festivities coming up on the River Front and the Annual Christmas Train will start soon.

Ms. Dawson informed Ms. Kenya Roberson the Council did question if the Monroe Regional Black Chamber was included for the Southside Small Business Meet and Greet but the Council wasn't included in the preparations.

Upon motion of Mr. Marshall, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack the minutes of the Legal and Regular Session of November 9, 2022, were unanimously approved.

Ms. Vee Wright, 415 Gulpha West Monroe, asked the Council to not approve the minutes of the Legal and Regular Session of November 9, 2022, and the reason she is asking is because the person who normally takes the notes does a very good job however, she noticed an error. She said the notes indicate that she was escorted out of the meeting after numerous attempts to overtalk Council Chair Dawson. She stated she never attempted to overtalk Council Chair Dawson, but Ms. Dawson was speaking loudly and overtalking her. She said she was engaged in a conversation with Ms. Dawson but there was absolutely no overtalking. She further stated if she is to overtalk anyone it would not be an attempt, but she will accomplish it. She said she would like the minutes to be amended and she said if anyone would like to see the exchanged, they can see it on video. She noted the Council may vote for it, but she is asking them not to go forward with the error. She further noted she wants it to be on record, that didn't happen if the Council is going to approve the minutes. She said Happy Thanksgiving and God willing we will return in two weeks' time and do this again.

Ms. Woods wanted to know with Ms. Wright's controversy of the minutes will her comments be recorded on the November 22, 2022 minutes.

Ms. Carolus Riley, Council Clerk, said yes.

Ms. Dawson said she thinks the minutes should stand as they are because there were times Ms. Wright was asked to have a seat by the Marshal's and herself. She asked for the minutes to stay the same and the Council to approve the minutes.

ACCEPTANCE OR REJECTION OF BIDS:

(a) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack, seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved to consider request from the City of Monroe Purchasing Division for Council approval to Reject all bids received on November 10, 2022, for the Louisiana Purchase Exhibit Phase 1 – The Swamp Project bids to be Rejected. The bids exceeded the total project funds. (There were no public comments.)

Ms. Woods wanted to know the amount the budget was exceeded.

Mr. Curt Kelly, Director of Purchasing, said it was over approximately 220 percent and he said they don't know at what point they will put it back out for bids. He said they didn't have contractors and only one bidder for the project.

Mrs. Ezernack wanted clarification that the project is not being abandoned but being rethought through before it comes back.

Mr. Kelly said right.

RESOLUTIONS AND MINUTE ENTRIES:

Council:

(a) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack, seconded by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved a Resolution No.8398 granting an exception to the Open Container Ordinance to the City of Monroe (Christmas on the River) pursuant to Monroe City Code Sec. 12-231 D. (Open Container Ordinance), and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no comments.)

Department of Administration:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Marshall, seconded by Mrs. Woods and unanimously approved to consider twenty-one (21) Renewal Applications for a New 2023 Class A Alcoholic Beverage Permit. The Monroe Police Department has no disqualifying records and Sales Tax has been approved. (There were no comments.)

(b) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack, seconded by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to consider thirty-three (33) Renewal Applications for a New 2023 Class B Alcoholic Beverage Permit. The Monroe Police Department has no disqualifying records and Sales Tax has been approved. (There were no comments.)

(c) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack, seconded by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to consider three (3) Renewal Applications for a New 2023 Class B Alcoholic Beverage Permit. The Monroe Police Department has no disqualifying records and Sales Tax has been approved. (There were no comments.)

(d) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack, seconded by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to consider one (1) Renewal Application for a New 2023 Class D Alcoholic Beverage Permit. The Monroe Police Department has no disqualifying records and Sales Tax has been approved. (There were no comments.)

(e) Upon motion of Mr. Marshall, seconded by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to consider one (1) Renewal Application for a New 2023 Class E Alcoholic Beverage Permit. The Monroe Police Department has no disqualifying records and Sales Tax has been approved. (There were no comments.)

(f) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack, seconded by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to consider two (2) Renewal Application for a New 2023 Class G Alcoholic Beverage Permit. The Monroe Police Department has no disqualifying records and Sales Tax has been approved. (There were no comments.)

Department of Planning & Urban Development:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Marshall, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved a Resolution No.8399 authorizing Stacey Rowell, Director of Administration, to execute a Professional Services Agreement with Ken McManus of Service Group Unlimited, LLC. for professional services and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no comments.)

Ms. Woods asked the Department of Planning & Urban Development to talk about the Professional Services Agreement.

Ms. Ellen Hill, Director of Planning & Urban Development, said this agreement allows the Community Development Division to work with the engineering firm to do environmental reviews for the HUD related programs. She said the department is required to have agreements before they can expend home funds and she said they have not expended any home funds since 2020 because of covid. She said they are ramping up projects and all the projects require environmental reviews to be done. She noted the engineering firm has the experience and expertise.

Department of Public Works:

(a) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack, seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved a Resolution No.8400 approving and authorizing a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement by and between the City of Monroe and the University of Louisiana at Monroe as per the attached agreement and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no comments.)

Engineering Services:

(a) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack, seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved a Resolution No.8401 authorizing an authorized city representative, to enter into and execute a Professional Master Services Agreement with Wetlands Unlimited, LLC, to provide environmental, and related professional services and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no comments.)

(b) Upon motion of Ms. Woods, seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved a Resolution No.8402 accepting as substantially complete work done by and between the City of Monroe and W.L. Bass Construction, Inc., for the Pedestrian Bridge at Renwick Improvements Projects, and further providing with respect thereto.

Ms. Kenya Roberson, 116 Glenwood Drive, noted with a Professional Services she knows there is a certain amount the Mayor can approve without it having to come before the Council. She wanted to know if this project is complete or will there be more amounts with this project.

Mr. Morgan McCallister, City Engineer, said with a substantial completion a walk through is done and they have a punch list which those items were on the list. He said they are given a

dollar value which is part of the money withheld if the contractor does not complete the project. He noted this is not additional money allocated and it is not a change order. He further noted there is a pay estimate left to be processed. He said if the contractor doesn't finish, they do not get paid for those items.

Ms. Roberson wanted to know if this is the last thing that needs to be completed.

Mr. McCallister noted engineering did a walk through with the contractor and these are the items they felt needed to be addressed before the completion of this project. He noted they were given until December 23, 2022, to make those corrections.

Ms. Roberson wanted to clarify if the punch list was supposed to previously been done at 100 percent with no issues, but painting and other things needed to be touched up.

Mr. McCallister said not necessarily, yes it should have been done but with every project you're going to have punch list items for a walk through.

Ms. Roberson said she understands.

Mrs. Ezernack noted this wasn't a Professional Service, but it was a bid contact.

(c) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack, seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved a Resolution No.8403 authorizing Mayor Friday Ellis to sign all documents in connection with the acquisition of properties related to State Project No. H.007300 Highway: Kansas Lane – Garrett Road Connector & I-20 Improvements Route: La 594 Ouachita Parish and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no comments.)

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

The Chairman opened the Public Hearing and seeing no come forward the Hearing was closed

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Marshall, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved an Ordinance No.12,142 authorizing Stacey Rowell, Director of Administration, to enter into and execute a lease by and between the City of Monroe and Berry Plastics Corporation, and further providing with respect thereto. (Admin.) (There were no comments.)

The Chairman opened the Public Hearing and seeing no come forward the Hearing was closed

(b) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack, seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved an Ordinance No.12,143 authorizing the City of Monroe to acquire a certain parcel of real property from I-20 Corridor Properties, LLC, situated in Ouachita Parish, Monroe, Louisiana, said property is located near the corner of Tower Drive and Bienville Drive containing 8.45 acres ± in Monroe, La, and further providing with respect thereto. (Admin.) (There were no comments.)

(c) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack, seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved an Ordinance No.12,144 declaring the repair of the roof at the City Hall Annex located at 3901 Jackson Street an Emergency and necessitating immediate repair and or replacement and further providing with respect thereto. (Admin.) (There were no comments.)

Citizen's Participation

Dr. Lisa Vanltoose, 3825 Old Sterlington Road, said she is the owner of the Ujima Center Community Care Center, and she yielded her time to Ms. Tracy to tell the Council reasons why they need to figure out ways to partner better with the City.

Ms. Tracy Elmore stated she is fifteen years old, and she has lived in Parkview for five to six years which is the most tragic thing a child can go through. She said children should not have to expensive living in Parkview. She said living in Parkview she was a broken child, lost, confused, and she had no hope for herself. She stated this past summer she was put into the Ujima Center where she was nurtured and shown how a child should be treated. She said she now has a closer relation with God, and she said the Ujima Center is a place a child can go to be loved and feel safe.

Dr. Vanltoose said she is asking the Council to guide the Ujima Center on how to start having conversations to provide more information about the services the center provides and possible

collective grant writing. She said she is a scientist and a clinical professor for Baylor University, but she lives in Monroe, Louisiana.

Ms. Woods thanked Dr. Vanltoose for coming out to the Council meeting. She apologized for not recognizing Dr. Vanltoose who was present at the Council meeting, and she said she will be visiting her facility soon.

There being no further business to come before the council, the meeting was adjourned at 6:32 p.m., upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack and it was seconded by Mr. Marshall.

Mrs. Kema Dawson
Chairman

Carolus S. Riley
Council Clerk

Ileana Murray
Staff Secretary