

City Hall, Monroe, Louisiana
January 23, 2023
6:00p.m.

The Honorable Vice-Chairman Gretchen Ezernack, called the meeting to order. She then asked the clerk to call roll.

There were present: Mrs. Ezernack, Ms. Woods, & Mr. Marshall

There was absent: Mr. Harvey & Mrs. Dawson

Vice-Chairman Ezernack announced that a quorum was present, and that the Invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance would be led by her designee.

The Invocation was led by Reverend Nelson of Faith Harvest Baptist Church.

COMMUNICATIONS & SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Ms. Woods said good evening to everyone, and it is good to see the Monroe Fire Department at the Council meeting. She thanked the Monroe Fire Department for their service to the City of Monroe and Chief Terry Williams for his leadership. She stated the Council will be in Washington D.C. on tomorrow to meet with the congressional delegation to talk about programs for the City. She further stated they will figure out how to work with our delegation and with the leadership in the City. She said they will see how to get funding for much needed projects in our community. She said there are a lot of things she would like to see done in District 3 and she is hoping they will be able to bring back dollars to work on some projects in District 3. On another note, she noted she had conversations with Legal about funding for large yellow ribbons to put on light poles that are out in our community. She said she is very serious about no dark spaces in District 3. She further noted Legal told her she will be able to use some of the contingency funds in District 3's account to provide the ribbons. She said she will be reaching out to organizations in our community to work together to eliminate dark spaces and mitigate crime in our community.

Mr. Marshall thanked everyone for coming out to the Council meeting. He stated District 4 will get on board with Ms. Woods with the yellow ribbon for no dark spaces and he suggested getting the whole City involved in the program. He noted there is a lot going on in District 4 and he said Rolling on the River will be February 4th. He said it will be a whole day of fun and the World Famed Grambling State Marching Band will be in attendance. He asked everyone to come out to enjoy the festivities on the River Market and he said the Children's parade begins at 10am, the Mardi Gras Madness begins at 11am, and the parade starts at 5pm. He stated the Krewe of Janus will be on February 11th and the Black History parade will be on February 25th. He further stated if you haven't registered for the parade the Renaissance Committee have applications available. On another note, he thanked the City for all the work they have been doing and he said there is a lot of construction going on to provide safer streets for our residents. He said Saturday the City celebrated the unveiling of the NELA Music Trail landmark at the Monroe Civic Center. He said he wasn't aware the City had so many people who came here to host concerts such as Ray Charles, The Temptations, Michael Jackson, and New Edition. He said it was a good thing to acknowledge and hopefully the City can pick that back up. He said there is a lot of development going on around town and the newly renovated Walnut Street two-bedroom apartments across from the Children's Museum are beautiful. He thanked everyone for coming out to the clean up on South Grand Street and Jackson Street. He said they had about 40 to 50 kids come out to participate along with their mentors to make our communities look better.

Mr. Jimmie Bryant, Chief Operating Officer, setting in for Mayor Ellis said on behalf of the Mayor who is in Washington D.C. for the Lobbying Trip, has just finish his National Conference of Mayors and sends his regards. He said the Mayor wanted to thank everyone who participated in the 44th Annual Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Salute. He said the Mayor wanted to remind everyone the City has some severe weather on the way, and he wants the residents to be mindful of ditches and debris.

Mrs. Ezernack thanked everyone for being at the Council Meeting on a Monday night. She echoed the sentiments of Ms. Woods, and she thanked the Monroe Fire Department for their rescue on West Deborah Drive. She said the City appreciates the Monroe Fire Department in regard to the

unfortunate accident and what they do every day for the City of Monroe. She said the Monroe Police Department is always on top of everything as well and we appreciate all the men and women of both departments. She said she spoke to Mr. Morgan McCallister, City Engineer, about several projects that are progressing, and she said the City appreciates all the work they have done. She stated Mr. Charles Westrom, Sewer Manager, has been very helpful and she appreciates his efforts as well as her constituents who are affected by these particular items on the agenda. She thanked Reverend Nelson for his inspirational message.

Upon motion of Mr. Marshall, seconded by Ms. Woods the minutes of the Legal and Regular Session of January 10, 2023, were unanimously approved. (There were no public comments.)

ACCEPTANCE OR REJECTION OF BIDS:

(a) Upon motion of Ms. Woods seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8430 accepting the bid of Bright Construction, LLC, in the amount of \$44,216.00 for the 302 Bell Avenue Home Rehabilitation Project, and further authorizing an authorized city representative, to enter into and execute a contract for said services. (There were no public comments.)

Ms. Woods thanked Ms. Ellen Hill, Director of Urban & Planning Development, and the entire department for this Home Rehabilitation Project. She said the property owner lives in her district and the family has been on the list for a very long time. She said it is refreshing and rewarding to see this come to fruition.

(b) Upon motion of Mr. Marshall seconded by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8431 accepting the bid of Perspective Building Solutions, LLC, in the amount of \$55,550.00 for the 260 Oregon Trail Home Rehabilitation Project, and further authorizing an authorized city representative, to enter into and execute a contract for said services. (There were no public comments.)

RESOLUTIONS AND MINUTE ENTRIES:

Council:

(a) Upon motion of Ms. Woods seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8432 appointing Yolanda Washington as Internal Auditor of the City of Monroe and further providing with respect. (There were no public comments.)

Ms. Woods thanked Mrs. Yolanda Washington, Internal Auditor, for all the work she does and keeping the City intact. She congratulated Ms. Washington on her certification and her appointment.

Mr. Marshall said congratulations to Mrs. Washington.

Mrs. Ezernack congratulated Mrs. Washington and she stated she had quite a bit of an educational challenge to get this final certification. She said she has been working on it diligently and now the Council is able to make this appointment official on tonight.

Add on: Upon motion of Ms. Woods seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved to add a Resolution to the agenda as item (b) granting an exception to the open container ordinance to the Twin Cities Krewe De Riviere (Mardi Gras Parade) pursuant to Monroe City Code Sec. 12-231 D. (Open Container Ordinance), and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

(b) Upon motion of Ms. Woods seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8433 granting an exception to the Open Container Ordinance to the Twin Cities Krewe De Riviere (Mardi Gras Parade) pursuant to Monroe City Code Sec. 12-231 D. (Open Container Ordinance), and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Department of Administration:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Marshall seconded by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8434 authorizing the City of Monroe to contract with Henderson Auctions to conduct an auction of surplus movable property and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

(b) Upon motion of Ms. Woods seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved to consider one (1) 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 public comments.)

(c) Upon motion of Mr. Marshall seconded by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to consider one (1) Renewal Applications 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 public comments.)

Department of Public Works:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Marshall seconded by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8435 authorizing a designated city representative to execute a Professional Services Agreement with LJA Engineering Inc. relating to Storm Water Management Program Implementation Services and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Ms. Woods wanted to know if this item is a renewal.

Mrs. Angie Sturdivant, City Attorney, said it is an annual contract.

Mr. Charles Westrom, Sewer Manager, said this is a renewal that comes up once a year for managing the stormwater runoff requirements put in place by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the State of Louisiana. He said the City must have a program and LJA Engineering are the engineering consultants.

(b) Upon motion of Mr. Marshall seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved to remove a Resolution adopting the City of Monroe/Transit System Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Ms. Woods wanted to know why the item was being removed from the agenda.

Mrs. Sturdivant said per Mr. Marc Keenan, Monroe Transit General Manager, there were some items that needed to be edited. She said it will be back on the agenda for the February 14th Council meeting.

(c) Upon motion of Mr. Marshall seconded by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to consider request from the Public Works Street Division for authorization from the City Council for an authorized City representative to advertise for bids for the following items: a 2023 International Ford F750 14 Yard Dump Truck; a 2023 John Deere 50D Mini Excavator; a 2023 Bucher Municipal V65h Vacuum- Style Sweeper; a 2023 International Ford F750 – 6 Yard Dump Truck; a 2023 Vac All Model AJV – 1215 Combination Vacuum Machine; and a 2023 Aerial Manlift Bucket Truck. Funding for this item will come from the Capital Fund. (There were no public comments.)

Ms. Woods wanted to know how much money is allocated from the Capital Funds for these items.

Ms. Stacy Rowell, Department of Administration, said they have not given her a list of cost yet.

Mr. Sean Benton, Interim Public Works Director/Water System Manager, said currently they are asking for permission to advertise for bids and a lot of the equipment they are requesting to buy are items that have been run down. He said they haven't replaced equipment in probably the last seven or eight years. He said most of these items are related to drainage, streets, and a bucket truck because the current bucket truck is a 1985 model.

Ms. Rowell stated some of the funding is a reimbursement from FEMA directly related to the trash pickup which put a lot of the City's equipment in disrepair.

Ms. Woods wanted to know if the City can get bids for these items and buy them immediately.

Mr. Benton said a lot of the items are bid items and some of the items have await time of three to six months. He said some of the items they are trying to receive before the mowing season and some equipment isn't available because everyone is bidding and trying to get equipment.

(d) Upon motion of Mr. Marshall seconded by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to consider a request from the Public Works Wastewater Plant for authorization from City Council for an authorized City representative to advertise for bids for an Ultraviolet Disinfection (UV) System. Funding for this item will come from the Capital Fund. (There were no public comments.)

Mr. Sean Benton stated the wording on the agenda for this item is wrong. He said the agenda states it's for the beautification division, but this item is for the Water treatment plant.

Fire Department:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Marshall seconded by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8436 authorizing the purchase of a Heavy Rescue Truck off of State Contract and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Captain Dennis Gardener, Monroe Fire Department, came forward to explain this purchase, he said the Fire Department formed an apparatus committee during the summertime of last year to develop a plan for a new rescue truck for the City of Monroe and its visitors. He stated the rescue truck is the only one of its kind in the City and it runs City wide responding to all structure fires, vehicle accidents, and any other kind of special rescue beyond the capabilities of the local engine company. He further stated the Fire Department toured a rescue truck in Slidell, La manufactured by the Pierce Fire Apparatus last summer and it surpassed their expectations of what they needed to provide quality and efficient service to the Citizens. He said moving forward they believe they have a good plan, and he thanked the Council for the opportunity.

Mrs. Ezernack wanted to know the timeline for the rescue truck to be built and delivered.

Captain Gardener said two years or maybe less because of the increase in production time, covid, and the demand for supplies have increased.

Mr. Marshall thanked the Fire Department for their dedication and time they put in to go above and beyond.

Ms. Woods wanted to know if the schematic drawing the Council received will be what the new rescue truck will look like.

Captain Gardener said yes.

Mrs. Ezernack wanted to know will the new rescue truck be housed in the same location as the current rescue truck.

Captain Chris Abby, Monroe Fire Department, said it will be located on Hwy 165 South at the Public Safety Center (PSC).

Ms. Woods wanted to know will the old rescue truck still be used.

Captain Abby stated the current rescue truck is eight years old and by the time they get the new truck it will be ten years old. He further stated once they receive the new truck the old truck will be a backup.

(b) Upon motion of Ms. Woods seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8437 authorizing the purchase of equipment for the Monroe Fire Department off of State Contract and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Mr. Brandon Payne, Assistant Fire Prevention Chief, said the Fire Department recently acquired 8 Dodge Rams and are in the process of acquiring six Chevy Tahoe's but they need authorization to equip the vehicles with emergency lighting.

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS & ORDINANCES:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Marshall seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance authorizing the City of Monroe to grant to Entergy Louisiana, LLC an overhead right of way for electrical utilities. (There were no public comments.)

Ms. Woods wanted to know a little bit more about this item.

Mrs. Angie Sturdivant, City Attorney, said this project is near the City Shop Public Works yard and it's a right-of-way for energy. She said she thinks Energy will relocate some of its existing electrical utilities and at the next Council meeting they will have the exact sketch attached.

Ms. Woods said she doesn't know exactly where this is located but wanted to verify that this is on the City's property.

Mrs. Sturdivant said yes.

Citizens Participation:

(1) Ms. Judy Babb, Twin Cities Krewe de Riviere, stated on behalf the Krewe de Riviere she wanted to thank the Council, the Fire Department, and the Police Department for their help with the parade. She thanked them for their support as they are rebuilding the building on South Grand and for their continued support as they bring free events to the City.

(2) Ms. Jessica Hollins, 2415 Grammont, MCAL, said the Monroe City Academy League is elated to announce their second season basketball opener was on January 19th at the Marbles Community Center and the Johnson Community Center. She said on Thursday they had 10 games and on Saturday they had 12 games. She said they have 491 academy athletes practicing at Saul Adler Community Center, Benoit Community Center, and Johnson Community Center. She said they have 11 independent teams from surrounding areas. She said they are thankful to the parents and the City, but they have some concerns.

(3) Mr. Stonewall Hunter, MCAL, said some of their concerns are dealing with their recent scheduling between MCAL and the community centers. He said they met with Mrs. Angie Sturdivant, City Attorney and Ms. Patience Talley, Director of Community Centers and Programs on November 30th with their season presentation. He said they also met with the Community Center supervisors with the same packet on December 9th which noted their clinic dates. He said they communicated in the first meeting that our renewal of the Cooperative Endeavor Agreement would mimic the same deal they were under last year. He said Ms. Talley sent him and Mr. Tyree Hollins, MCAL, a text regarding the game schedule on the 16th of January and they sent her the schedule on the 17th of January but on January 18th less than 24 hours before game day they were notified that Benoit Community Center would be used for the Homeschool basketball game. He said they had to move to another center and the inconvenience put a hit on their reputation. He said no disrespect to the Homeschool basketball, but they have over 600 participating athletes and they communicated their schedule as early as November of last year. He stated on Saturday they were notified by Community Center workers of other dates they may have to change but they had no communication from Ms. Talley about these changes until they reach out to her about it. He further stated MCAL would like some clarity surrounding the CEA and the partnership that they would like to build with the City.

Mrs. Ezernack suggested MCAL meet with Mr. Doug Seegers, Director of Community Affairs, to schedule a meeting to discuss their concerns.

(4) Mr. Tyree Hollins, 2415 Grammont, stated he feels if he didn't reach out to Ms. Talley about the dates being changed, they would have never known anything about it. He said he texted her on Saturday, but she didn't respond back until Tuesday. He said once he made contact with Ms. Talley, she informed him of the potential dates they will have to change. He said it was inconsiderate and they are trying to do their diligence with the community providing resources for the youth. He said he feels they get the short end of the stick and they have put in tremendous hours of work, blood, sweat, and tears.

Mrs. Ezernack said MCAL is doing a wonderful job and she is sorry the conflict happened. She said Mr. Seegars is the person who is in charge of the whole program and for MCAL to meet with him after the meeting to make sure it doesn't happen again. She said she knows the amount of hard work they put in and she apologized for the situation.

Mr. Marshall said they definitely appreciate everything they do.

Ms. Woods said the Council apologize because MCAL is doing an amazing job. She said she was there for the kickoff on Thursday, and it was packed with people. She said they are doing an amazing job with the children and there is definitely support on her behalf. She stated she would definitely like to see the meeting with Mr. Seegars happen because when she spoke with Ms. Talley, she told her everything was perfect after they got through the hiccup on January 19th.

Mr. Marshall said the Council definitely appreciates everything they do and it's not being overlooked. He said the things that go on behind the scenes that nobody sees are the things that

really touch the kids. He said it takes us all working together to make the whole thing successful, and he said whatever it is that transpired for it to be hashed out and we move forward.

Mrs. Ezernack said the program has been successful because the Council knows where MCAL started out with a smaller group and how they have expanded the programming.

There being no further business to come before the council, the meeting was adjourned at 6:47 p.m., upon motion of Mr. Marshall and it was seconded by Ms. Woods.

Mrs. Kema Dawson
Chairman

Carolus S. Riley
Council Clerk

Ileana Murray
Staff Secretary