

City Hall, Monroe, Louisiana
March 28, 2023
6:00p.m.

The Honorable Chairman Kema Dawson, called the meeting to order. She then asked the clerk to call roll.

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

There was absent: None.

Chairman Dawson announced that a quorum was present, and that the Invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance would be led by Mayor Ellis or his designee.

The Invocation was led by Mr. Morgan McCallister, City Engineer.

COMMUNICATIONS & SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Mr. Harvey had no announcements tonight.

Mrs. Ezernack welcomed everyone to the City Council Meeting, and she congratulated everyone involved in the Kansas Lane Connector. She said today the City was happy to break ground on Phase 1 of the project and it will be a wonderful asset to our community and those traveling through our community.

Ms. Woods thanked everyone for coming to the City Council Meeting and she said for those listening at home the Council appreciates them. She stated tonight she was going to recognize the Carroll High School Basketball team, but she was notified by the principal that the students were out of town enjoying their Spring vacation. She congratulated Mr. Brandon Horne, a 2022 Neville High School graduate, who has been elected the 79th Student Government Association President for Southern University in Baton Rouge, LA and he is a member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity. She further stated Ms. Jordan Williams, 93rd Miss Southern University has ties to the Twin Cities and Northeast Louisiana as well. She thanked everyone that helped to jump start the tie a yellow ribbon around the light poles that are out, and they are starting in District 3 but hope to move this project throughout the City of Monroe.

Mr. Marshall welcomed everyone, and he thanked everyone for coming to the City Council Meeting. He said Mr. Tyree Hollins and Mr. Trey Hunter of the Monroe City Academy League (MCAL) have been doing a wonderful job throughout the year and they recently had a showcase at Richwood High School, it was phenomenal. He recognized them for what they are doing in the community with the kids, not only in Monroe but also taking the kids to other places. He said the volunteers in New Town and Region Eight Community Resources are having a movie night April 8th at the Orange Street Playground and on April 21st Connect-ED is having a Community Education and Employment Fair at Emily P. Robinson Recreation Center from 11am until 1pm. He said there will be tons of employers and a lot of educational resources. He said the Northeast Delta Human Services Authority (NDHSA) Art is Therapy Festival will be on April 2nd downtown from 1pm until 5pm using art as a medicine.

Mrs. Dawson stated the 3rd Annual Walk Around the Block for Autism is on Saturday April 1, 2023, at the Old State Farm building, 24 Accent Drive Monroe, LA starting at 8am. She said if you have any questions about sponsorships or vendor information contact Ms. Brenda or Ms. Shontae Johnson by email info@wadasag.org or at 318-323-2141. She said on Saturday April 8, 2022, "Thy Kingdom Come" presented by Carolyn's Dance Land will be at the Monroe Civic Center at 6pm and there is no charge. She further stated she thinks this will be a great production that she will be a part of and for everyone to come to support this wonderful production. She said Blight Boot Camp will be Saturday April 22, 2023 "All Hands on Deck to Fight Blight" at 8am until 2pm sponsored by Planning and Urban Development and see Ms. Ellen Hill, Director of Planning and Urban Development, for more information. On another note, she stated on tonight the Council have visitors from Living Water Ministries International where the Senior Pastors are Mr. Adrian and Mrs. LaTondra Fisher, and she believes this is the Kingdom Mens Ministry.

Pastor Earl Davis, Assistant Pastor Living Water Ministries International, said they are here from the Kingdom Men Ministry because they want to get their members involved in the governmental

process. He said members are concerned about how their tax dollars are spent and want to know what is the process of mitigating situations within the community. He said he thought one of the first places they should come to is the City government. He said they want to know who represents the Districts in the City and know how the agenda plays out.

Mayor Friday Ellis said if the Living Water Ministry members would like to get the councilmembers and his cell phone number to meet with them as group or be able to meet with the children to talk about what the City officials do on a daily basis they can stay after the meeting.

On another note, the Mayor stated he has a couple of announcements and people he would like to honor in the community. He stated the two art murals chosen were by Mr. KaDavien Baylor and Mr. Eric Francis and they will be painting the basketball courts at Charles Johnson Park. He said the Black Creatives Circle of North Louisiana will be doing the basketball courts at the Powell Recreation Center. He further stated the artists were able to submit their designs and they were selected by the design committee that is in conjunction with the Louisiana Office of Cultural Development as well as the local Arts Council. He noted the Kansas Lane Phase 1 is 27 years in the making and the City kicked off Phase 1 today with Governor John Bel Edwards with his commitment to see this project through. He further noted Phase 1 will go from Highway 165 to Old Sterlington roughly over 2 miles and they are working to get Phase 2 in the Fall that will go from Louisiana Baptist Children Home on Kansas Lane through Cypress Point. He said ultimately the City is working up to Phase 3 which will connect those two for late Fall 2024 to hopefully get it going in 2025 to where the community can drive on it. He thanked everyone who has been involved in the Kansas Lane Connector Project since day 1 and all legislators who supported and funded this, the City couldn't have done it without them and a big thanks to Governor John Bel Edwards. He said the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) announced Amtrak will be joining the City's application along Interstate 20 and the City will pin a letter to the FRA to ask them to fund the entire route. He said this is a five hundred to eight hundred-million-dollar project that will connect Atlanta, GA to Dallas, Tx and the City just received the Economic impact, and they are going over those number, but they look good for our region. He noted the Big Haul project with Public Works is going on this week and this is a way for Public Works to work with residents to get rid of bulk items at their homes. He further noted the things that are allowed are yard waste and furniture and the things that are not allowed are televisions, stoves, refrigerators, tires, washers, dryers, and hot water heaters. He said for more information go to the City's Facebook site or call 318-329-2209 to request your time of pick up and Public Works will come out to pick up the items at no charge. He also thanked Pastor Terry Barnes and Pastor Vance Price for feeding the Monroe Police Department and he said they came out to cook for the officers to show them love and appreciation for the hard work they do. Mayor Ellis had further announcements to recognize Ms. Kristie Bardell, Director of the Children's Coalition for Northeast Louisiana, he said she has been a wonderful asset to our community. He said today he has the honor of presenting a proclamation declaring April 1st through the 7th as the Week of the Young Child in conjunction with the Children's Coalition for Northeast Louisiana.

Ms. Kristie Bardell thanked the Mayor and the City of Monroe for all their support for the Children's Coalition for Northeast Louisiana. She said the work that they do would not be possible without leaders and community partners. She said this is a critical week because this is an opportunity to increase awareness around the kids who depend on adults to speak up for them.

Mayor Ellis stated for his last organization to be honored he asked Ms. Kari Barnett to come to the podium. He further stated the mission of Pilots for Patients is something he holds near and dear to his heart. He asked Ms. Barnett to give the public some information about their mission and what they do in the City of Monroe.

Ms. Kari Barnett, Marketing & Event Coordinator, -99stated Pilots for Patients is a nonprofit voluntary organization that flies patients needing specialized treatment that they can't receive locally. She said the organization started in 2008 by the founder and President Phillip Thomas and they have flown over 6,952 missions which is over 2.5 million nautical miles. She said they have about 130 active pilots and they fly all Louisiana base patients up to 300 nautical miles.

Mayor Ellis presented the Key to the City to the Pilots for Patients founders Mr. Philip and Sharon Thomas to thank them for their service to the community.

Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mr. Marshall, the minutes of the Legal and Regular Session of March 14, 2023, and the Legal and Special Budget Hearing Meeting minutes of March 6, 2023, were unanimously approved. (There were no public comments.)

PROPOSED CONDEMNATIONS:

The following condemnations were considered:

(1) 709 Reed Street (D4) (Owner – Mattie A Riser) Notice to show cause was served. Photographic evidence was presented. Upon motion of Mr. Marshall, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved, the building was condemned, and the property owner was given 120 days in which to bring the structure into compliance with the Code or demolish the Structure and clean the lot. (There were no public comments.)

Ms. Ellen Hill, Director of Planning and Urban Development, stated the property is an open dilapidated structure and certainly not in a condition that is livable. She said she believes the Code Enforcement Officer tried to reach out to the property owner to inform her about the process. She said they are requesting the property be condemned, giving the owner 30 days to demolish the property and clean the lot.

Mr. Marshall wanted to know if Ms. Hill had any contact with Ms. Riser.

Ms. Hill said it is noted in her paperwork that Code Enforcement did speak to Ms. Riser before Environmental Court to let her know about the process and that she should appear in court to let the hearing officer know about her plans for the property. She said Ms. Riser was trying to sell the property but she was not sure as of yet.

Mr. Brandon Creekbaum, Assistant City Attorney, stated Ms. Riser was present at the Environmental Court proceedings.

Mr. Marshall wanted to know Ms. Riser’s plans for the property.

Ms. Mattie A. Riser came forward and said she plans to demolish the property herself and she checked to see how much the City would charge to demolish the property, but it was recommended she finds someone on her own because it would be cheaper. She said she just needs a little more time to come up with the funds and she has about half of the amount they are requiring.

Mr. Marshall wanted to know how much time will Ms. Riser need.

Ms. Riser said the property doesn’t look the same, they have done a lot of work cleaning up the property but as much time as the City will allow.

Mr. Marshall motion to condemn the property giving the owner 120 days to rid the property of any obnoxious growth or debris with further respect thereto.

Ms. Hill announced “Blight Boot Camp” is April 22nd and the goal is to engage our citizens with Code Enforcement, Legal Department, and Public Works to begin the conversation on how to tackle blight as a community. She said if you attend the Blight Boot Camp you will be able to sign up to see if you are eligible for the Healthy Housing Grant for property in Monroe and it will be up to \$28,000 that they may be able to invest whether you rent or own. She said they are looking for 50 to 60 houses to do in the next 12 to 16 months and if you have applied to this program before you can call the Community Development Office at 318-329-2256 to speak with the staff.

Mrs. Dawson wanted to clarify if the sign-up information will be on the City’s website.

Ms. Hill said yes, she believes the Blight Boot Camp flyer is already up on the website and they will be sending the second flyer tomorrow.

ACCEPTANCE OR REJECTION OF BIDS:

(a) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8478 accepting the bid of Vacuum Truck Sales & Service, LLC in the amount of \$443,250.00 for the 2023 Truck- Mounted Combination Jet/Vacuum Machine and further authorizing an authorized city representative to enter into and execute a contract for said work. (There were no public comments.)

Ms. Woods wanted to know if the Vacuum Trucks are custom fit.

Mr. Curt Kelly, Director of Purchasing, said when they put a project out for bids, they put specification on what the truck is to be outfitted for and this company responded to the bid as submitted.

Ms. Woods wanted to know when the trucks are anticipated to be out in the community.

Mr. Kelly said the trucks are on the lot and once the Council approves, they will have people that will drive to get those trucks.

(b) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8479 accepting the bid of Vacuum Truck Sales & Service, LLC in the amount of \$304,000.00 for the 2023 Vacuum Style Street Sweeper and further authorizing an authorized city representative to enter into and execute a contract for said work. (There were no public comments.)

(c) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8480 accepting the bid of ETEC Services, Inc., in the amount of \$965,000.00 for the WPC Ultraviolet Disinfection System and further authorizing an authorized city representative to enter into and execute a contract for said work. (There were no public comments.)

(d) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved to Consider request from the Monroe Purchasing Division for authorization from the City Council that all bids received on February 14, 2023, be rejected for the Police Uniform, Police Specialized Uniforms and Police Equipment. (There were no public comments.)

Add-on: Upon motion of Mr. Harvey seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved to add item (e) to the agenda to consider request from the Purchasing Division for approval from the City Council to reject all bids on March 23, 2023, for the Chennault Golf Paths Improvements project. The bids exceeded the total project funds. (There were no public comments.)

(e) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved to consider request from the Purchasing Division for approval from the City Council to reject all bids on March 23, 2023, for the Chennault Golf Paths Improvements project. The bids exceeded the total project funds. (There were no public comments.)

RESOLUTIONS AND MINUTE ENTRIES:

Council:

(a) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8481 granting an exception to the Open Container Ordinance to the Northeast Louisiana Arts Council for a fundraiser (Blend) pursuant to Monroe City Code Sec. 12-231 D. (Open Container Ordinance), and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

The Chairman noted the Council has been asked to remove items (b) & (c) until further notice.

(b) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved to remove from the agenda a Resolution removing Karl Dhaliwal from the Board of Commissioners for the Southside Economic Development District and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

(c) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved to remove from the agenda a Resolution appointing _____ to the Board of Commissioners for the Southside Economic Development District and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Department of Administration:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8482 authorizing a designated city representative to sign a Claims Administration Agreement with Louisiana Agricultural Corporation, LLC and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Legal Department:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8483 authorizing the City of Monroe to participate in the National Settlements of Opioid Claims and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Mayor's Office:

(a) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8484 authorizing a designated city representative to enter into a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement between the City of Monroe and the Miss Louisiana Organization as per the attached agreement and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Department of Public Works:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8485 adopting the City of Monroe/Monroe Transit System Public Transportation Title VI Plan and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

(b) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8486 authorizing a designated city representative to execute Change Order No. One (1) for the Rehabilitation of Runway Lighting State Project No. H.013624, between the City of Monroe and Ouachita Electrical Contractor, LLC, for an increase in the amount of \$123,894.95 and an additional 10 calendar days and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Fire Department:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey seconded by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8487 authorizing a designated Monroe city representative to apply for and accept an Assistance to Firefighters Grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency on behalf of the Monroe Fire Department for funding to purchase smoke alarms. (There were no public comments.)

Engineering Services:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8488 accepting as substantially complete work done by and between City of Monroe and Highway Graphics, LLC for the City Street Striping Phase V Project, and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

(b) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8489 authorizing Mayor Friday Ellis to enter into and execute the Medium Intensity Approach Lighting System with Runway Alignment Indicator Lights (MALSR) Power Supply Agreement between the City of Monroe and Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

(c) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8490 authorizing a designated city representative to execute Change Order No. (4) for the Texas/Standifer Trunk Sewer Emergency Repair Project between the City of Monroe and Dixie Overland Construction, for an increase in the contract amount by \$200,062,21 and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

(d) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8491 authorizing a designated city representative to execute (Close Out) Change Order No. Two (2) for the Magellan-Broadmoor Storm Sewer Emergency Repair, between the City of Monroe and Hemphill Construction Company, inc. for a decrease in the contract amount by \$24,731.00 and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

(e) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8492 authorizing a designated city representative to execute Change Order No. One (1) for the Kansas Lane Est. (Old Sterlington-US 165) Phase 1 between the City of Monroe and the Department of Transportation and Development and D&J Construction Company, LLC to change the base course item to allow crushed concrete and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

(f) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8493 authorizing a designated city representative, to execute Change Order No. Two (2) for the Kansas Lane Ext. (Old Sterlington-US 165) Phase 1 between the City of Monroe and the Department of Transportation and Development and D&J Construction Company, LLC to change the base course item to allow crushed concrete and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS & ORDINANCES:

(a) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance amending and adjusting the City of Monroe Operating Budget for the fiscal year 2022-2023 (Admin.) (There were no public comments.)

(b) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance adopting and amending the Zoning Map for the City of Monroe, Louisiana and authorize the Clerk to publish notice of a Public Hearing and further providing with respect thereto – Applicant – City of Monroe – (PUD/P&Z) (There were no public comments.)

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

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

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved an Ordinance No. 12,155 adopting a Budget of Revenues and providing for an estimate of items and expenditures for the fiscal year 2023-2024. (Admin) (There were no public comments.)

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

(b) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved an Ordinance No. 12,156 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, 2023, to April 30, 2028 (Admin) (There were no public comments.)

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

(c) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved an Ordinance No. 12,157 authorizing the Mayor Friday Ellis to sign all documents in connection in connection with the acquisition of properties related to State Project No. H.013972 – Youngs Bayou Detention Pond, Ouachita Parish and further providing with respect thereto. (Eng) (There were no public comments.)

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

(d) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved an Ordinance No. 12,158 authorizing a designated city representative to execute a Lease Amendment to the contract of lease by and between the City of Monroe and AvFlight Monroe Corporation, and further providing with respect thereto. (Airport) (There were no public comments.)

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

(e) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved an Ordinance No. 12,159 authorizing a designated city representative to execute a Consent to Assignment of Lease from Corks, LLC to AvFlight Monroe Corporation, and further providing with respect thereto. (Airport) (There were no public comments.)

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

(f) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved an Ordinance No. 12,160 Amending Ordinance No. 11,264 which authorized a Lease between Delta Airlines, Inc. and the City of Monroe/ Monroe Regional Airport and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

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

(g) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved an Ordinance No. 12,161 Amending Ordinance No. 11,263 which authorized a Lease between

American Airlines and the City of Monroe/Monroe Regional Airport and further providing with respect thereto. (Airport) (There were no public comments.)

Citizen's Participation:

The Chairman reiterated the 3-minute timer, and she stated when the buzzer sounds, please be seated, or be escorted by the Marshals.

(1) Mr. Verbon Muhammad, 203 Marx Street, said he put in a Freedom of Information request (FOI) in July of 2022, and he received a response from Mr. Casey Auttonberry, Assistant City Attorney from Legal but he hasn't heard anything since. He said he is requesting the Council ask Legal to respond to his FOI request.

(2) Ms. Keisha Sparks, 607 North 3rd Street, said she works for Acadian Ambulance, and they are hosting an EMT class, and they have been doing this class since 2020. She said they have had 19 students go through the program and 16 have passed National Registry to become certified EMTs. She said they have another class coming up May 16th and you don't have to pay anything up front. She said the classes are 2 days a week held locally in Monroe and a Ouachita Parish Firefighter teaches the class which is a four-month course. She said you are guaranteed a job full time and starting pay for an EMT is 33,000 a year and if they see fit, they can send you to paramedic school.

Mr. Harvey thanked Acadian Ambulance Service for continuing to provide this program.

(3) Mr. Tyrone Dickens, 3004 Dick Taylor, said he spoke with the Council about two months ago about meeting with the Council and the Mayor to bring back to Monroe something for the older people to do. He said they are still trying to bring the Delta Fest back, but it doesn't have to be called the Delta Fest. He said he knows the Council feels the younger crowd brings violence, but they haven't had any problems. He said he is just trying to get a meeting to bring something to the City of Monroe at least once a year and he brings a lot of money to this State and he shouldn't have to go out of State.

Mr. Marshall noted he had a couple of other people that put on shows to approach him as well and he thinks they just need to meet and see how they can make it happen. He further noted the City does need those events in our community and there is no reason everybody should have to go out of town to put on shows.

Mr. Dickens said he agrees safety is first and he will even bring his own security, but he just wants a time they can sit down and talk.

Mr. Marshall said they will address the concerns and make it happen.

Mrs. Dawson stated they will schedule a meeting.

There being no further business to come before the council, the meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m., upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack and it was seconded by Mr. Harvey.

Mrs. Kema Dawson

Chairman

Ms. Carolus S. Riley

Council Clerk

Ileana Murray

Staff Secretary