

Monroe City Council Legal and Regular Session
May 28, 2019
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 28, 2019 at the Council's regular meeting place, 400 Lea Joyner Memorial Expressway, City Council Chambers/City Hall Building, Monroe, Louisiana.

The Honorable Gretchen Ezernack, Chairwoman, called the meeting to order and asked the Council Clerk, Ms. Riley to call the roll.

Council members present for roll call: Mrs. Gretchen Ezernack, Ms. Juanita Woods, Mr. Michael Echols, and Mr. Kenneth Wilson.

Council members absent: Mr. Eddie Clark

Chairwoman Ezernack declared a quorum.

The Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance were led by Mayor Mayo.

COMMUNICATIONS & SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. Mr. Echols welcomed each one present.
2. Ms. Woods welcomed each one present; asked that everyone would be mindful of the children being out of school and to drive safely for the children; she wished everyone a good summer.
3. Mr. Wilson welcomed each one present; he thanked everyone for their calls, texts during the loss of his sister; he thanked Mayor Mayo for the proclamation and Ms. Woods for presenting it during the services for his sister.
4. Mayor Mayo welcomed each one present; Mayor Mayo made a Proclamation presentation to Major Ron Griggs, a video was shown featuring Major Griggs, his work, accomplishments and volunteerism. Mayor Mayo asked Marc Keenan, Transit to come forward; Mr. Keenan stated he received an email about the bus shelter and he gave an explanation of why the bus shelter was taken down due to the damages of the shelter and the sinking of the slab foundation from the Parkview apartments bus area and an update for the future plans of the bus shelter; he presented a power point of the shelter with solar lighting, with the shelter costing \$; the bus shelter is being repaired along with the slab foundation repair; citizens can continue getting the bus at the location; Ms. Woods asked for the date of completion of the repairs; Mr. Keenan said it would be two weeks. Mr. Wilson stated the email came from Ms. Benjamin on his behalf; he stated that Mr. Keenan mentioned previously that the shelter would be relocated and asked if he was saying that it would not be relocated; Mr. Keenan said originally, it was going to be relocated on the other side of the bridge, but after talking with the city and public works, it was decided they could repair it after his thoughts of it being difficult to repair. Mr. Wilson thanked him for expediting it and that Mr. Clark and the citizens of District 5 will appreciate the repair work being done to the shelter.

Mayor Mayo asked Ms. Hill, PUD Director to come forward; Ms. Hill commented the notices of information were shared in an earlier email; she announced a review of the annual consolidated performance report for the HUD funds to be held June 3, 2019, 6pm at the Public Safety Center and Tuesday, June 4, 2019, 6pm, at the Public Safety Center, a discussion for the annual action plan for FY 2019 funds.

Mrs. Ezernack thanked Major Ron Griggs for his service to our Country and his continued service to our community; it is an honor to have someone of his stature in our community.

Upon a motion of Mr. Wilson and a second, by Ms. Woods, the minutes of the Legal and Regular session of May 14, 2019 were approved unanimously. (There were no public comments).

PRESENTATION: NONE.

PUBLIC HEARINGS: NONE.

PROPOSED CONDEMNATIONS: Public Comment: NONE.

ACCEPTANCE OR REJECTION OF BIDS: Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Mr. Echols, second by Mr. Wilson and unanimously approved to Accept the bids of Belt-Pro, Crossett AR, MSC Industrial Supply, Shreveport LA and Industrial Mills & Maintenance, Texarkana, TX for a one-year supply contract of work tools, raingear, boots etc., for the Public Works Dept., Ref#2020-00000003 as recommended by the Director of Administration for meeting the specifications of this bid. The Vendors meet the specifications of this bid. Funds will be derived from the Inventory Account and billed to the divisions accordingly. The Tax & Revenue Division has confirmed that these bidders are tax compliant. (There were no public comments).

RESOLUTIONS AND MINUTE ENTRIES: Council: Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Mr. Echols, second by Mr. Wilson and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7457, granting an exception to the Open Container Ordinance to the Chennault Aviation and Military Museum (Bull in the Streets Fundraiser) 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 Mr. Echols, second by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7458, granting an exception to the Open Container Ordinance to the Twin City Arts Foundation (Raku-B-Q) at the Masur Museum 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: Public Comment: NONE.

Department of Planning & Urban Development: Public Comment: NONE.

Legal Department: Public Comment: NONE.

Mayor's Office: Public Comment: NONE.

Department of Public Works: Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Ms. Woods, second by Mr. Wilson and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7459, authorizing James E. Mayo, Mayor, to enter into and execute a Planning and Implementation Professional Services Agreement between the City of Monroe and Kutchins and Groh, LLC at the Monroe Regional Airport, and further providing with respect thereto.

Comment: Mr. Echols asked for the total amount of the contract; Mr. Phillips stated under the contract, for each project there would be a task order and a monetary value assigned to each task order. Mr. Echols asked what amount was being paid to the consultants and Mr. Phillips said the amount depends upon the task order submitted and they don't get paid until a task order is submitted and it's being done now on all the projects that's handled on the planning.

(b) Upon a motion by Ms. Woods, second by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7460, authorizing James E. Mayo, Mayor, to execute Change Order Number 1 (MLU Runway 4-22 Blast Pad Improvements) between the City of Monroe and Amethyst Construction Company to decrease the contract amount and cancel the contract of said project and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments).

(c) Upon a motion by Ms. Woods, second by Mr. Wilson and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7461, approving the assignment of that certain lease agreement at the Monroe Regional Airport by and between the City of Monroe and Daniel L. Peeler to Daveair LLC, and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments).

Department of Community Affairs: Public Comment: NONE.

Police Department: Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Mr. Echols, second by Mr. Wilson and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7462, authorizing a five hundred twenty-two and 82/100 dollar (\$522.82) increase in the purchase price for the vehicles for the Monroe Police Department and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments).

Fire Department: Public Comment: NONE.

Engineering Services: Public Comment: NONE.

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS & ORDINANCES: Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Ms. Woods; Voting YES: Woods, Ezernack, Echols; Voting to ABSTAIN: Wilson; approved to Introduce an Ordinance amending Chapter 10.5 Section 23 Entitled “Electronic Video Bingo Machines” of the Monroe City Code, and further providing with respect thereto. (Ezernack)

Comments:

1. Steve Hudnall, 165 Bingo, commented his formal objection to the proposed ordinance amendment, to reduce the one-mile limitation between bingo halls.
2. Don Hudnall, Snap Box Vending, commented the amendment would damage his business with the one-mile limitation.
3. Jason Garsee, Good Times Video Bingo, commented this is how charities make their money and do disagree with the market saturation and there are so many licenses allowed in the city of Monroe and not all are taken; competition is good, it’s a free market; he asked that this change be considered.
4. Angela LaFonta, Cash Metro Bingo, spoke in favor of the amendment; was given the occupancy license and was opened in 2015 across from their present location which they have already renovated it after being given the permission to do it.
5. Ronnie LeBlanc, supports the amendment and is the owner of a bingo location where an occupancy license and permits were already given for a bingo to operate prior to this proposed ordinance amendment coming up; he asked that consideration would be given for them to open up the bingo location.
6. Hardeman Cordell, said historically, this does not work, and he was involved in the creation of the ordinance; the one-mile radius was put in to prevent others from coming in close enough and being detrimental to your business and have seen bingo halls go out of business; this is why the one-mile radius was put in.

Mr. Echols asked if Ms. Baldwin could give him some legal specifics, as there have been discussions, but would like to understand it from her perspective; Ms. Baldwin said there was a certificate of occupancy issued for a bingo hall, but it is the electronic video bingo, is what they have to have a specific license for and this wasn’t obtained. She said the co is for bingo hall and you can have a bingo hall there but can’t have electronic machines without an electronic license, which the city never issued in this case.

Ms. Woods asked if the persons that are opening the bingo halls supposed to tell you in the beginning if they are doing the video versus the regular bingo; Ms. Baldwin said the application for certificate of occupancy, to her recollection had no mention of it being a video bingo machines is on there; and the certificate of occupancy states it’s for a bingo hall which is permitted in that location/zone and this is what planning and zoning issued; you have to have a license if you have video bingo machines and they did not acquire the video bingo license; Ms. Woods asked if there are a limited number of video bingo licenses for Monroe; Ms. Baldwin said there are 8 video bingo licenses that can be issued according to the ordinance and it could be nine; Ms. Baldwin read Section, 10.5-23 Section I of the Electronic Video Machine Ordinance; there have been seven issued ; Ms. Woods said regular bingo could go anywhere and asked if they were playing with cards there and said she didn’t know the difference; Ms. Baldwin said the regular bingo is when they are calling cards without the machines; and you have to have the license specific for electronic video bingo; a license from the state and present it to the city and if it meets the requirements of the city ordinance, then the city issues the video bingo license and in this case, it wasn’t issued because it violated the Section H which says, any commercial lessor who does not have a video bingo machine

in operation as of May 1, 2008 shall not be allowed to open within a one mile radius of the location of any commercial lessor who has operating machines; she said because they did not meet this requirement the video bingo license was not issued because they violated this requirement. Ms. Woods asked if they received anything from the State; Ms. Baldwin commented that she believes they did get it from the state, they do have a commercial lessor from the State for electronic video.

It was stated by a citizen that Ms. LaFonta was a commercial lessor and he is a distributor of the machines and the way the ordinance reads is, you can't have more than eight licensed lessors in the City, and there are currently seven lessors in the City and the reason he didn't have his license in the City is because the City denied him getting the stickers for the machines. He stated Mr. Hardeman Cordell has already broken the rule and the ordinance when they moved their bingo location to Eastgate shopping center which is within a half of a mile of two more bingo halls and doesn't understand why they are against it when they broke the rule and the ordinance themselves.

Mrs. Ezernack stated the ordinance was for Introduction and explained that the Ordinance was not a final adoption and it would not be finally adopted until the next scheduled meeting, if the advertising aspects of it meets the requirements per the Clerks regulation and it allows during the next two weeks to get more information and another opportunity will be given at the next meeting.

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

Open Public Hearing/Public Comment/Close Hearing: Chairwoman Ezernack opened the public hearing and seeing no one come forward, the hearing was declared closed.

(a) Upon a motion by Mr. Echols, second by Mr. Wilson and unanimously approved to Finally adopt Ordinance No. 11,935, Amending Section 15-16 (1), (2) of Chapter 15, Entitled "Fire Prevention and Protection", of the City of Monroe Code and further providing with respect thereto. (MFD)

Chairwoman Ezernack opened the public hearing and seeing no one come forward, the hearing was declared closed.

CITIZENS PARTICIPATION:

1. Mr. Lester Paster, citizen, spoke regarding his case and an order from the state court of appeals second circuit court; he asked that citizens visit his website veterans4justice.org. Mayor Mayo asked that Legal counsel give an opinion on this matter as it is a judicial issue and there need to be clarity on what Mr. Paster is stating. Ms. Baldwin commented that she is not aware of the case and has been in the civil division since 2011 and will pull the record and look into it. Mr. Paster asked her if he wanted him to give her a copy of the order from the court of appeals; Ms. Baldwin said she would find it; Mr. Paster said it has been removed from the Clerk of Court office, they said it caught fire and he has extra copies. Ms. Baldwin said it would be in the city court record, if there ruling was appealed. Mayor Mayo said he doesn't know what he or the Council has refused to do.

2. Ms. Barbara Jones, citizen, spoke regarding her concern for the care of all people.

3. Ms. Marie Brown, citizen, spoke regarding her concern for the open ditches near the new Martin Luther King School that need to be closed and the area need to be beautified.

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There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 6:50 p.m., upon a motion of Ms. Woods and seconded by Mr. Wilson. (There were no public comments)

Mrs. Gretchen Ezernack
Council Chairwoman

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.**