

City Hall, Monroe, Louisiana
June 11, 2024
6:00 p.m.

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

The Honorable Chairman Ezernack, 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 Ezernack announced that a quorum was present, and that the Invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance would be led by Mrs. Dawson or her designee.

The Invocation was led by Pastor Annanias Word from the Freedom Bible Church.

Mrs. Ezernack stated the City Council meeting has a full house tonight and she asked everyone to please make sure their cellphones are turned off or on silent. She asked the audience to please do not talk in their seats to their neighbor. She said the room don't have good acoustics and the Council can actually hear people talking in the back row. She said it can disturb their neighbor as they are trying to follow the meeting and she appreciated everyone's cooperation.

COMMUNICATIONS & SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS:

(1.) Mr. Harvey said good evening to everyone, and he had no announcements.

(2.) Ms. Woods said good evening everybody and it is so great to see them. She said it's been a long time since the Council meeting had full house and it's good to see everybody concerned about the business of the City. She stated at the last meeting she talked about violence in the community and yesterday she was visiting a housing development because she had gotten calls about a shooting. She said she was talking to the residents and looking at where some of the bullets had gone into the brick. She said as she was going to her car there was a crowd of people gathered in the streets and a lady pointing an AK47. She further stated she was nervous and people that live in some of these developments are enduring this daily. She noted they were telling her their afraid for their children and their children can't just go out and play. She further noted with that being said District 3 is having a neighborhood safety meeting tomorrow June 12th from 5pm until 6pm. She said this will be in the at Foster Height Community, 800 Swayze Street. She said the Executive Director of the Monroe Housing Authority, Officer Kwasic Heckard, and Marshal Robert Cherry will be there. She said they have sent out a communication to the residents because they want them to know they are concerned about their safety. She noted the Housing Authority will talk about the plan they are putting in place for the residents to feel safe. On another note, She stated the NOVA workforce Institute of Northeast Louisiana will host their annual graduation on Thursday June 13th at 6pm at the Greater New Antioch Baptist Church. She said if you are looking for a job, career change, or opportunities come by NOVA. She further stated they are all about making sure they can redirect the lives of people in the community with education, training, and getting people into those livable wage jobs with benefits and a career path. She noted on Thursday morning they are having a Juneteenth celebration that will be at the Great New Antioch Baptist Church. She said it is prayer breakfast on June 14th at 9am. She said at the last meeting the City designated the entire month of June as Juneteenth Celebration and she said there are so many activities. She said the Town of Richwood is having their Juneteenth celebration on Friday June 14th and the lineup is at 5pm and the parade starts at 6pm. She said if you have some time on your hands please come out and share in some of these parades. She announced the annual 19th anniversary of the Juneteenth celebration on June 15th lineup at Wossman High School at 8am, on June 15th Homeland bank is sponsoring Home in Monroe the City at the Civic Center from 9am until 1pm, and Family Day at the African American Museum on Saturday June 22nd the Juneteenth parade sponsored by the Black Chamber of Commerce starting at the Monroe Civic Center. She further announced She said on June 21st is an all-white party, and the Juneteenth Health and Healing 5k Walk at Chennault Park lineup is at 7:30 on June 29th which is free.

(3.) Mrs. Ezernack thanked Ms. Woods for informing and reminding the City of those dates. On another note, she announced the Council's Facebook live isn't operating at the moment and they are working on it. She said it may come on during the meeting but at this particular time it is not operational and there is someone looking into it.

(4.) Mr. Marshall thanked everyone for coming out.

(5.) Mrs. Dawson thanked everyone for being in attendance.

(6.) Mrs. Stacy Rowell, Director of Administration, sitting in for the Mayor had no communications.

Upon motion of Mr. Harvey and seconded by Mrs. Dawson, the minutes of the Legal and Regular session of May 28, 2024, were unanimously approved. (Mr. Marshall abstain he was not present for the last City Council Meeting.) (There were no public comments.)

PROPOSES CONDEMNATIONS:

4103 Lee Ct. (D4) – Owner – William B. Awl Notice to show cause was served. Photographic evidence was presented. Upon motion of Mr. Marshall, seconded by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved, the building was condemned, and the property owner given 30 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.)

Mr. Tommy James, Code Enforcement Officer, stated this is an open dilapidated structure and it was presented in Environmental Court in March. They are asking to condemn the property giving the owner 30 days.

Mr. Marshall wanted to know if there had been any contact or updates with the owner.

Mr. James said no.

Mr. Marshall motion to condemn the property, giving the owner 30 days to remove any debris noxious growth with further respect thereto.

112 S. 22nd St. (D3) – Owner – Yancy and Katie Pargoud Photographic evidence was presented. Upon motion of Ms. Woods, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved, the building was condemned, and the property owner given 30 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.)

Mr. James said this is an open dilapidated structure with broken windows and extremely high grass. He said it was presented in Environmental Court in March. They are asking to condemn the property giving the owner 30 days. He said there has been no contact.

Ms. Woods stated she is excited the City identified this property. She motion to condemn the property giving the owner 30 days to bring the structure into compliance with the Code. She said if not she would like the City to tear it down as quickly.

ACCEPTANCE OR REJECTION OF BIDS:

(a) Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8716 accepting the Base Bid of Sunbelt Fire, Inc. in the amount of \$586,277.00, for a Class A Pumper Fire Apparatus and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

(b) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved to accept the bids of Badger Meter, Inc. for the purchase of Badger Ultrasonic Water Meters Ref#2025-00000008 for the City of Monroe as recommended by the Purchasing Division for a one (1) year term of the contract with the option to renew two (2) times if the prices remain the same. The bid tabulation is attached. The supplier has submitted all the required paperwork. (There were no public comments.)

RESOLUTIONS AND MINUTE ENTRIES:

Council:

Ms. Woods motion to remove item (a) from the agenda until the new Council is seated.

Mr. Harvey wanted to clarify that the Council must have this done by State Statutes at the first meeting in June each year. He said in order to comply with the State Statutes he would advise the Council to follow it.

Ms. Woods wanted to know what the State Statutes say.

Mr. Brandon Creekbaum, City Attorney, noted the State Statutes states the police juries, city and parish councils, municipal corporations, and school boards in all the parishes, the parish of Orleans excepted, at their first meeting in June of each year, shall select a newspaper as Official Journal for their respective parishes, towns, or cities for a term of one year.

Mr. Harvey noted he looked this up because he was thinking the Council should wait for the new Council. He said he asked because he was wondering how municipalities that do not have daily newspapers comply with the requirements.

Motion failed for a lack of a second.

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mrs. Dawson and approved Resolution No. 8717 appointing the News-Star as the Official Journal of the City of Monroe, Louisiana, pursuant to the Louisiana R.S. 43:141 et. seq. and further providing with respect thereto. (Ms. Woods Nay)

Ms. Kenya Roberson, 116 Glenwood Drive, wanted to know if the News-Star has been the Official Journal in the past.

Mrs. Ezernack stated yes, the City had others as well and it is a daily newspaper.

Ms. Roberson wanted to know who was the Official Journal this past year.

Mrs. Ezernack noted the News-Star that is a daily newspaper which is required by Statute.

Ms. Roberson wanted to know if this is advertised, and she wanted to understand how the information is given out to various newspapers.

Mrs. Ezernack said the Council puts the information out and there is not a bid process.

Ms. Roberson wanted to know if it is a selection from the Council.

Mr. Harvey stated there is only one organization that fits the requirements and other newspapers that were elected were compensated by the Council, but everybody doesn't meet the requirements.

Ms. Roberson noted clarification to know the procedure and guidelines in order for someone to know how the News-Star is selected for the community to know the criteria. She said people really don't know and that is why she is getting clarification as to how it is being selected.

Mr. Harvey noted it is defined by State Statute and the Council doesn't define the criteria but ultimately they can make selections.

Ms. Roberson wanted to clarify that it is never published for the community.

Mr. Harvey said no, it's something that renews annually and selected at the Council's discretion.

Ms. Roberson wanted to know for a person that possibly want to own a newspaper and qualifications to bid on it in the future.

Mrs. Ezernack noted they can get with the Council Clerk.

Ms. Roberson suggested it could be published in the paper or put on social media.

Mrs. Ezernack stated the Council has done that in the past.

Ms. Roberson stated but not this time.

Mrs. Ezernack noted it is not required.

Ms. Roberson said she didn't say that it was required.

Mrs. Ezernack said the other two weekly papers do know what the Statute states.

Ms. Roberson noted she thinks Mrs. Ezernack is missing what she is saying.

Mrs. Ezernack stated they can call the Council Clerk and they will give them all the requirements and if the City is doing bidding, when the bidding starts, or they can submit their proposal. She said the Council Clerk is a wealth of information and if they call she will answer their questions.

(b) Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8718 recognizing the month of June as Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month and further providing with respect thereto.

Mrs. Dawson wanted to know if there was anyone present from the Alzheimer's Association.

Ms. Renee Calloway, Alzheimer's Association, stated they appreciate the City's support for raising awareness and education for Alzheimer's especially during National Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month. She said they are holding a walk on September 28th to end Alzheimer's as a fund raiser to go towards research, education, and advocacy and they would appreciate any support in that effort as well.

(c) Upon motion of Ms. Woods, seconded by Mr. Marshall to remove item (c) from the agenda to adopt a Resolution approving an amendment to Article VII of the Articles of Incorporation of Interstate 20 Economic Development Corporation and further providing with respect thereto. (Mr. Harvey, Mrs. Ezernack, & Mrs. Dawson Nay)

Mr. Rodney McFarland, 1017 Ouachita Avenue, Councilmen Elect for District 4, stated he is speaking against additional board members to the I-20 board. He said the City is now down to 21 days before the new Council members are seated. He said it seems again the City is in a rush to get things passed and done before the new Council get on. He further stated he has spoken to the Council to extend the olive branch to work with the Council and do what they can for the betterment of this city. He said to see things on the agenda being rushed is probably going to hurt the Council in the long run if they vote for these items. He said his question to the Chairman is as the Council is adding two members to the board why from North Delta and the Police Jury.

Mr. Harvey said he was going to answer.

Mr. McFarland noted he didn't call Mr. Harvey name.

Mrs. Ezernack said she is asking Mr. Harvey because he is on the board.

Mr. Harvey noted he is on the board, and he placed the item on the agenda that is why he spoke.

Mr. McFarland stated the Chair is the gatekeeper of the agenda items and the Chair should be well versed of everything that's on the agenda. He further stated he has a problem with the Council rushing and placing this on the agenda and then only selecting the North Delta and Police Jury to give an appointment on the board. He said not considering the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) or other minority organizations. He said is there anywhere that state if the Council move forward with this and they know it's not for the betterment of the people and the new Councilmembers object. He said if the Council moves forward that the Police Jury person be an elector of Monroe not the Parish. He said if the Council opens it up and put someone on the board from the Police Jury then they need to come from the City of Monroe. He noted he doesn't know if the Council thought about all these things the Council is trying to move fast and kind of trying to move some things around before the new Council get there. He further noted he is pleading with the Council to take this off the agenda and wait until the other two Council members are sworn in to have a round table in a public form. He said the Council can wait twenty one days because the Council will have four years to work with Mr. McFarland.

Mr. Verbon Muhammad, 203 Marx Street, echoed Mr. McFarland about increasing the board and he said there is a lot of strategy going on. He said the Council needs to stand back on this and he asking the Council to allow the new Council to come in to deal with it. He said there is language in the Resolution that the Council can only chose someone inside their district, and he wanted to know if the Chairman knew.

Mrs. Ezernack said yes.

Mr. Muhammad stated that had not been in there and he wanted clarification if they needed to live in the City.

Mrs. Ezernack said the I-20 district also does work in the parish and she would refer to Mr. Harvey because he sits on that committee. She said she knows the City extends into the parish.

Mr. Muhammad wanted to know why is there a limit now to only have someone from their district on board.

Mr. Harvey noted some of the property affected by the I-20 district is the parish property that ultimately gets annexed in the City. He said in his opinion, at the Council's pleasure he asked to consider this resolution and consider someone that represents the parish. He further noted in reality the Council has had a default vision because the parish engineer happened to be the engineer for the board for I-20. He said the Council makes decisions that affect the Police Jury, and he believes they should have a representative. He said North Delta is the City's transportation and planning hub and he encouraged anyone to attend an O.C.O.G meeting to ultimately see what they are doing. He said since most of everything that happens there is infrastructure investment he believes as the Council adds two members to not end up in split votes. He said he thinks someone outside of the City limits should actually be considered because this affects property outside the City limits.

Mr. Muhammad wanted to know what decision went into choosing North Delta and the Police Jury. He said there is only one juror that lives in the City.

Mr. Harvey stated he chose the two groups that are ultimately affected by the decisions of the I-20 board.

Mr. Muhammad said what about Richwood.

Mr. Harvey stated that is not the I-20 district.

Ms. Woods said she is concerned because she is basically trying understand why now. She said Mr. Harvey stated he served at the pleasure of the Council for four years and now all of the sudden he wants to do it; but why not do it two years ago or a year ago. She said it just doesn't look good when there are twenty-one days, and he could have waited to bring it after July 1st.

Mr. Muhammad noted the representatives that are representing the district don't live in the district and he wanted to know why that was being added.

Mr. Harvey stated he didn't per say in that language.

Mr. Muhammad wanted to know who did and he said the Council needs to turn it down.

Mr. Harvey said they've had before where someone would nominate someone who wasn't inside the City limits, and this aligns more with what the City's other commissions look like. He said to Ms. Woods question should he have done it sooner ultimately and it's one of those things that he wanted to get done.

Mr. Muhammad stated this agenda item is under the Council.

Mr. Harvey said that is right and he asked for the Council to do it.

Mr. Muhammad wanted to know if this is at the pleasure of the Council (Chair)

Mr. Ezernack said yes.

Mr. Harvey noted he put this on the agenda as his request.

Mr. Muhammad asked the Council to please turn this item down and let the them (Council Elect) deal with it.

Mr. McFarland noted he extended the olive branch and wants to be able to work together for four years. He said the way the Council is ending is not good. He said Mr. Harvey stated yes, he should have brought this a year ago but now he waited until the 9th hour to add two members to this board. He said he is asking Mr. Harvey and the Chairman to please wait because they will still be on the Council to work with Mr. McFarland.

Mrs. Ezernack stated she doesn't appreciate a threat to the Council.

Mr. McFarland said no, it's not.

Mrs. Ezernack stated she was offended last time he said it because it was a veil threat to the Council.

Mr. McFarland wanted to know what Mrs. Ezernack means by veil threat.

Mrs. Ezernack said it means it was kind of under the radar.

Mr. McFarland said that is her interpretation.

Mrs. Ezernack noted she was speaking, and she said when Mr. McFarland becomes the Chair he will have that opportunity as well. She said the olive branch Mr. McFarland extended only works if it is in his favor and that is exactly what has happened at each meeting. She further noted the Council is doing what they think is correct. She said will be able to do what he thinks is correct when he is seated at the Council. She said there is nothing to say when he is sworn in that he can't add two more members and get it through the Council. She said she thinks part of that is the activity of I-20 board has expanded greatly over the last couple of years. She said it has become apparent that more of it is in the parish and the North Delta Economic Group research area. She said if he ever comes to an O.C.O.G (Ouachita Council of Governments) meeting he would see the power that they have and the resources they have that I-20 Development Group can use.

Mr. McFarland noted that is the reason why the Council needs to wait until the new Council are seated. He said four years ago when two members were elected they stated they would take it easy and not put nothing major on the agenda until the new Council people were seated. He said now the Council flipped the script and don't want to wait and he asking them to please wait. He said they can all sit down together to work this out. He said it's not a threat and this is how he speaks and knows people have studied him, so they know.

Mrs. Ezernack said she hasn't studied him.

Mr. McFarland said well some have and they have intel to know who said this, that, and the other. He said the Council can work together if the Council pulls some of the items off and sit down together after July 1st to take the City to another level. He said he wants peace, love, and harmony.

Mrs. Ezernack asked the Marshals to help control the crowd this evening and she has asked them to not clap and talk for the Council to get through the agenda. She said if they would like to come to the podium to state what they want to state out loud to the rest of the audience that is fine. She asked the audience to please reframe from talking to their neighbor.

Mr. Roosevelt Wright, 2406 Oak Street, stated he has one observation concerning this resolution and he echoed Mr. McFarland that this should be something the next Council should take care of. He said there is a line in the resolution that says that each Council will get a chance to appoint a person to the board. He said there is also a line that says the Mayor can take them all off at will and that shouldn't be. He said if a Councilmember represents someone they respect that person's thinking, and that line is saying if that person doesn't agree with the Mayor then he will just take them off. He said they shouldn't have the Council recommend anyone and the Mayor appoint them all. He said it should say the Mayor can remove only the people he appoints, and he thinks the Council shouldn't deal with it tonight. He said they should wait and talk about it, especially when the Mayor is here.

Mr. Harvey stated for Mr. Wright not to imply that was added now.

Mr. Creekbaum stated it has been in there since 2005.

Mr. Wright said what he meant was it shouldn't have been there to start with, and it is a dictatorship and kind of an oxymoron. He noted to say each Council member can name one person and for no cause the Mayor can take off the person the Council put on. He said the Council should talk about it and maybe it's not a good time to vote on it.

(The Chairman called for the vote to remove item (c) from the agenda: Ms. Woods: aye, Mr. Marshall aye, Mrs. Ezernack nay, Mr. Harvey nay and Mrs. Dawson nay)

(c) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mrs. Dawson and approved Resolution No. 8719 approving an amendment to Article VII of the Articles of Incorporation of Interstate 20 Economic Development Corporation and further providing with respect thereto. (Ms. Woods & Mr. Marshall voted nay)

Mr. Muhammad said they are trying to work with the Council but they're not listening. He said there are still a lot of questions Mr. Harvey needs to take back to the I-20 board because the new Council will have plenty of questions and the Council is doing this without the new Councilmember's input.

Mr. Harvey noted Mr. McFarland continues to remind him in twenty-one days and the Council Elects will probably have all kinds of changes.

Mr. Muhammad stated there not necessary right now if the Council would be considerate while they are in the transition period. He said it's obvious the Council has an agenda they are pushing through, but they will fight it.

Mr. McFarland said he will not be silent when he knows things are wrong and the Council is trying to move forward at fast pace, at the last minute, and at the ninth hour. He said there is no way they can go to sleep tonight and say they have done the right thing. He said they can sit down and talk this out together so they can work together, and the people of Monroe can see all five Councilmembers working in harmony to move the City forward.

Mr. Marshall stated he understands the concerns of those coming in but also some of the language is not appropriate. He said if they are going to work together that should be the conversation every day. He said he understands the Council Elect feel a certain way about the resolution which is fine, and he feels like they should have the opportunity to discuss it. He further stated there is a way to approach every matter and if they don't get passed that, they will be in a cycle forever. He said he feels they need more conversations with it and with that being said he voted nay.

Ms. Woods said she wanted to have it removed and she thinks the Council is moving too quickly. She said she was on the Council for the previous administration, and everything was on hold. She noted the Council waited until the new Council and the Mayor was seated before taking care of serious business of the City. She said they are trying to do too much, there is a lack of communication and with that being said she voted no.

Mrs. Dawson stated they are still in office regardless of who is coming in after them, they still have a job to do, and a term to complete. She said the City's business has to be done and will continue to be done even after they are out of their seats. She further stated they will continue to do business and progress the City while still in office and she voted aye.

Mrs. Ezernack noted she agrees with Mrs. Dawson, and she said they do realize the Council Elect have an opportunity to bring forth their ideas, but the Council also have a commitment to their constituents to make the City better. She said they are doing their part by voting whatever way they wish to vote and with that being said she voted aye.

Mayor's Office:

(a) Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8720 approving the two (2) year appointment of Mayor Friday Ellis as a Director to the Board of the Louisiana Local Government Environmental Facilities and Community Development Authority and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Ms. Woods stated before she votes, for the benefit of the public, and she knows they're not listening out there because for some strange reason Facebook is down. She said she thinks it was orchestrated because the Council have all these people here and nobody wants people to hear what is being saying. She said that is her opinion and what she is entitled to. She said she is definitely in favor of moving the City forward. She further stated her only concerned is the rush of doing what the City is doing. She said this is her home and she represents ten thousand people and they put her back in office unopposed. She said apparently they think she is doing a pretty decent job and with that being said she voted aye.

Mrs. Ezernack noted as far as the internet and the ability to go on Facebook tonight that happen earlier this evening. She said they had been diligently working to get it back on and she said unless a ghost or something fiddled with it, no one did.

Mr. Harvey said it's a public meeting with dates published.

Engineering Services:

(a) Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8721 approving Change Order No. Fourteen (14) for the Water Treatment Plant Renovation and Expansion 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. 8722 accepting as Substantially Complete work done by Amethyst Construction, Inc for the Parkview Dr. Improvements (Winnsboro Rd. to Plum St.) Project and further providing with respect thereto.

Mr. Verbon Muhammad asked Mr. Morgan McCallister, City Engineer, if there will be a Phase 2 to this project. He said it's good the City got it paved but from East Street to Winnsboro Road they need to look at putting a turning lane. He said during a certain period of time during the day no emergency vehicles can get through.

Mr. McCallister stated no Phase 2 is planned.

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS & ORDINANCES:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mr. Harvey and approved to Introduce an Ordinance approving the Hockey Agreement between the City of Monroe and Perkin Hockey Group LLC further providing with respect thereto. (Ms. Woods nay.)

Ms. Woods motion to remove item (a) from the agenda. She stated that this was done, and she was not aware of it until she saw it on the television.

Mrs. Ezernack asked if there was a second. Motion failed for lack of a second.

Mr. Rodney McFarland wanted to know if this is considered a first reading on this item.

Mrs. Ezernack noted this is an introduction only.

Mr. McFarland said they saw all the fanfare on television and social media about seasoned tickets, but it has never been introduced to the Council. He said he heard the statement about wanting to continue doing business and that is what the last Council said as well. He said things that were major they waited until the new Council were seated. He said that was four years ago and now the Council have amnesia and don't remember. He said he has a lot of questions, and he has started going through the documents, it stated \$3,000.00 dollars a month for the Civic Center.

Mrs. Ezernack said the rent is actually \$4,000.00 dollars a month, it's not \$3,000.00 dollars and there are also provisions included to increase overtime and profit sharing that the City will have as well. She said that Mr. Creekbaum can actually explain it better because he was instrumental in putting the lease together.

Mr. McFarland wanted to know when that amount ends.

Mr. Brandon Creekbaum, City Attorney, noted if the hockey team invest to at least a million dollars' worth or equivalent to capital and infrastructure investments into the facility for the team, in exchange is that in that significant investment of the facility and alterations the rental fee will go down to \$3,000.00 dollars a month.

Mr. McFarland wanted to know if the \$3,000.00 goes down will it be brought before the Council.

Mr. Harvey says that it is contingent on their capital expenditure investment with what Mr. Creekbaum had just mentioned.

Mr. McFarland stated can the Council not wait 21 more days until the new Council is seated.

Mr. Harvey said that he wants to clarify what was said when referring to amnesia. He said he looked up the date of the election and back in 2020 the election was on July 11th. He said there was a meeting on July 14th and the agenda had been set before the election. He said they had everyone except one Council member. He stated to say that the Council went on this hiatus until everyone was seated just isn't true.

Mr. McFarland said that he disagrees with Mr. Harvey, and he is still asking that they wait until they get seated so that they can get all of these questions answered. He said that he is not saying that they are going to vote against it, he just wanted to wait until they get in to work through it. He said the Council is trying to make it a law based off of what he has read.

Mr. Creekbaum stated for clarification normally the City would have done this by resolution, but because there is a section in the City Code dealing with the rental of the Civic Center and the arena, this had to be done by ordinance. He said this was a structure agreement and not a single use rental that is addressed by the code which is to keep it consistent.

Mr. McFarland wanted clarification with the City had to move forward on this tonight or if the Council can wait.

Mr. Creekbaum said the matter is on the agenda and it's at the pleasure of the Council.

Mr. McFarland said he will remember that, and Mr. Creekbaum has spoken well. He said that it is at the pleasure of the Council to table this matter until the new Council is seated.

Mr. Roosevelt Wright, 2406 Oak Street, said as a general rule he reads the agenda and all of the attachments in detail. He said that the contract for this Moccasins contract is thirty pages long and he questioned whether all the members of the Council sat down and read all these thirty pages and have spoken with Mr. Creekbaum, because he noticed a minute ago when we ask questions, they were referred to Mr. Creekbaum which implies that you may not understand what is in the contract. The way that he understood is that the City is about to let the Moccasins use the Civic Center, starting off at a \$4,000.00 rental fee and if they put in a million dollars' worth of investment in, that the rent would drop down to \$3,000.00 dollars a month. He said that it's not going to take them long to get to a million dollars after they start putting in the ice floor and all the things they need etc., instantly they will be at a million dollars, so the rent will go down to \$3,000.00 really quick. He said then the City will be doing all of the janitorial work, and they won't have to pay for any of that and we are giving them all signage, they get all of that. He said if it's that simple it shouldn't be thirty pages long but if it's 30 pages long then the devil is in the details. He said that the Council members that are still in office have the responsibility to read those documents and he doubts that they have had a meeting to ask questions with Mr. Creekbaum line by line. He said that 23 years ago, we had a team like this, that started off with a great attendance. It started with 3,500 people averaging per game. For each year, the attendance began to decrease so much so until the last year they didn't have enough people it took to sustain itself. If it failed once before, then this Council has the responsibility to make sure that The City doesn't get left holding the bag. He said that it is the responsibility of this Council to make sure they take time to read the contract completely before introducing this ordinance on the agenda. He said that we might be moving too fast if they haven't taken time to read the contract in its entirety before introducing it.

Mr. Verbon Muhammad, said that as a Council elect, he would like to be responsible to his constituents to answer questions about this. He said that he is not trying to tell the Mayor what to do, but he should have gotten a buy in from the Council. He said that finding out about this on news without knowing about it is a problem. He said not to introduce this to the Council first when it's something major as this is not good. He said he's not saying that he's going to vote against it, he's just saying that he thinks that they should bring them in if they want him to support it. He said that everyone needs to know what's going on, because it's a lot. He said if the City had it 23 years ago, what did they learn from it, that can be different.

Mr. Harvey said that he thinks our job as Council is to give them an environment to succeed versus the responsibility the success of a local hockey team for them to have those clarifying statements.

Mr. Muhammad said there needs to be some conversation with some people.

Ms. Marie Brown, 1002 South Fifth Street, she said she's not going to spend her time trying to tell them to do the right thing, since they've heard it from the men tonight. She said the room is full and she is hoping all these people are voters. She said that it's going to come to a point that if you don't listen to the people, there is going to be fallout. She said that she doesn't want anybody to say that we are holding up progress. She said that the Council have to stop thinking that they can keep doing something and the public are not going to respond in a different way. She said that she's been to two council meetings, and she's seen the Mayor twice, they probably know where he is, but we don't, but maybe when the hard stuff comes, he allows them to be the front barrier. She said they will learn to not spend their money in places they're not welcomed. She said everything that the Council is doing is saying they don't care about what Districts 3,4, &5 say, think, or feel. She said that there is going to come a time when we are going to do what we need to do. This is the time that Districts 3,4,5 need to stick together like glue like never before and she sees the divide. She said the Council don't need to put a business up that failed.

Mrs. Ezernack said that nobody has brought this up about a failed business because the people that are bringing this business here are not the same people that ran it before, which were local investors. She said that this is a really good firm that has been checked out by the Administration thoroughly before they got into this. She said reading a thirty-page document, lease, agreement is

what she does for a living. She said that if Mr. McFarland and Mr. Muhammad wants to know more about it, they can reach out to Mr. Creekbaum, and he will go over it with them line by line if they want to. She said that she has spoken to him about it and she's sure that some of her colleagues have as well.

Ms. Brown said if the City advertise before it comes to the Council, and everyone is excited about it that like hockey make it hard for the public to build their concerns around it. Secondly, she said that if she rents the Civic Center, it's going to cost her about \$3,000.00 and you have to get a million dollars' worth of insurance for a one-day event.

Mrs. Ezernack said that there are other provisions the City can profit from as well.

Ms. Brown said that they don't get it and they never look at the other side of nothing and it's all about what the Council decide and want. She said that this could have been brought to the community and Ms. Woods didn't know about until she saw it on television. She said when this new council comes in and they don't hear you, remember this day.

Mrs. Ezernack said once again another threat.

Ms. Brown said when the public say something, don't take it as a threat, take it as a truth, my opinion, it's not a threat. She said it's what I see and if you can't see what I see, you can't feel what I feel.

Mrs. Ezernack said it goes both ways.

Ms. Brown agreed. She said that why don't you see that the same thing you're doing, you don't expect the same people to do and act the same way. She said it's logical, if you can't hear me what makes you think I can hear you. She said that Bishop said that he was extending the Olive Branch, she said you all know what that means we all go to church. She said that it means that I'm willing to work with you, but when you break it, why would you think I need to work with you. She said that the same way she has been watching the current council is the same way she will be watching the new council members. She said that she has never bitten her tongue when it comes to speaking her mind and she mentioned that Mrs. Ezernack should know that because she's been on the Council. She said she wants the council to work together, but it takes three votes.

Mr. Roosevelt Wright said he's already had a conversation with Mrs. Ezernack and Ms. Woods, where she said that no one discussed this with her, and she had no knowledge about it. He said if they put down an ice floor, to keep that ice floor cold the air conditioner would need to be put on very high, that means there is going to be an increase cost in the utilities, and an increase cost in janitorial work because there are not a lot of people working there right now to help clean up behind two games. He asked if they remember they didn't play 28 games here, but in this contract, it would be a total of 28-30 which means a lot of cleaning up to do. He is asking if they have put the numbers into it, to see what the City's actual cost is while doing this. He said that if the Council is unable to answer the questions from the constituents, then this item shouldn't be introduced at all until everyone is well versed about it. He said that they want to see Monroe grow, but we have to be fully aware of the increased costs that come along with introducing this item. He said that this was a failed business attempt at first and the investor is not local man. He said that he looked the guy up and he is a solid person, trying to get a major hockey team in New Orleans, this is just a minor team that feeds into it. He said that those of you who are the City's fiscal agents have to know all the cost that this consists of before you vote yes on it.

Mr. Parker Moskul, Managing Partner of Perkin Hockey Group, LLC, thanked the City for having him tonight and he recently moved to Monroe and it's by far his most favorite place to live. He said that the people here have been amazing, the food has been second to none, and being in Baton Rouge has made him fall in love with the whole state of Louisiana. He said he grew up in a very under privilege part of California, and he said he was fortunate enough they opened up a Salvation Army Center. He said he was in a homeless shelter in San Diego, CA where that organization had a hockey rink. From the age of 8 to 18, hockey had given him several opportunities in life. He was able to get an education with hockey, he was able to meet some amazing people who he can call family playing hockey. His main goal that he has with bringing this team to Monroe is to give the youth something that they can do. He said that they plan to have rental skates and hockey gear and take kids like him who wouldn't normally have access to the sports, by giving them the ability to play the sport with no cost to them. Their plan is to donate a lot of equipment, have clinics, and

start youth programs. He said that everyone should be involved, everyone should feel like they have equal access to this sport. That is his main goal personally. He said from an economics standpoint, he was in Baton Rouge last year, having the team there for one year had an \$18.1-million-dollar economic impact. He did a lot for the community as well, especially people coming from out of town to watch the game, hotel stays, and it generated more people to the downtown area. He said on the hockey side, there is a reason why they are going to be successful long term are the following: the ticket prices are lower than they were in 2001, \$318.00 for an entry level ticket, which is about \$11.25 a game. They are able to do it because of their operating budget today with this league is a quarter of the operating budget it was in 2001. He said that they will be operating way less than them which makes teams in this league able to sustain. Every team in this league has gone into a market where hockey has failed for whatever reason and based off that model, they have had several teams for multiple years become successful in their community. He said that he is very fortunate and blessed to be part of this community and he hopes that we can all get along for many years to stay.

Mr. Brenton Creighton, 103 Stephens Drive, West Monroe, La, he said that he has lived here his whole life. He said that he is grateful to be surrounded by people who are a part of this faith-based community.. He said that when he stands on his faith, there is evidence and proof to back it up. He said that he has witnessed in the last two to three years the success that comes from the Perkin Hockey Group, LLC. He said that he has had multiple dreams that he has had where he sees success in hockey. He said that he wants to stand on his faith with his faith-based community with the confidence and faith that he has the evidence to prove it. He said that he is not a dollar and cents guy, not a business guy, listening to the concerns about cost, but while in prayer he said if we are going to do this, we have to have more than enough sustainability, capital, money, and all the things to ensure that it is successful and no one has to worry about anything, because we have faith. He said that this is more than just hockey, its success will not just impact the sport, but the community as well. He said that if you want to know anything about his success, he can sit down and tell you about it along with evidence to back up his story.

Mr. Shannon Blue, 94 Lincoln Road, Business Owner in Monroe, stated he and his family are new hockey fans and over the last few years have spent thousands of dollars traveling to watch. He said he is excited to be able to spend that money.

Mr. Casey Tripp, 123 Verwood Road, said he is concerned as an educator, and they are training students with the skills to work in hotels and restaurants and if the City don't have a tourism base to bring jobs they will be the lost generation. He said having this as a tourist attraction will help generate opportunities for the city.

Ms. Kenya Roberson, 116 Glenwood, said wholeheartedly she don't think anyone is against a hockey team but the way it was introduced to the community should have been done differently. She stated how it will affect the people who utilize the Civic Arena when they want to have events. She feels like if they are going to be giving back into the community, then there should have been some community engagement from the beginning to find out the needs of the community.

Ms. Teresa Fisher, 400 Hillside Circle, she went to the first game for the Moccasins, that next day she bought season tickets. Shortly after that she started a youth hockey team that consisted of 25 kids, four years later she had over 200 kids in Monroe. She said when they left, she started a roller hockey team of 120 kids. She had so many parents come to her saying that their kids weren't into baseball, football, etc., and this gave them another option of a sport to pursue. She is in favor of the team coming because this is another managing group that's over the team. She said to give them a chance and come to one game, she guarantees that you will be hooked.

(Mr. Marshall leaves the Council Meeting at 7:35 p.m.)

Ms. Debbie Habner, just moved to Monroe from Nashville and one of the things she was excited about was hockey was returning back to Monroe. She is a real fan of the sport and loved how it brought the community together.

Mrs. Michelle Tripp, 123 Verwood Road, said that hockey didn't fail because it enriched her life. She was a young teenage photographer that started taking pictures and they loved her photos where she got an opportunity to take pictures for them. She now takes pictures for the News-Star as a freelance photographer, and it has enriched her life. She said that Hockey didn't fail.

Ms. Mondarian Douglas, 5513 Long Drive, said that she was concern after listening to the powerful testimonials made her more suspicious and she is asking Councilwoman Dawson to not consider this item. She wanted to know if Councilwoman Dawson read the agreement and if she have any concerns.

Mrs. Dawson said she doesn't, and she is actually excited about it.

Ms. Douglas said they want to make sure they read every line and District 5 doesn't know much about it.

Ms. Tonia Freeman, 6315 Cypress Point Drive, asked if they don't vote on it tonight will the contract be off the table.

Mrs. Ezernack noted this is introduction and there is another step it has to go through. She said normally between and the future the Council get additional answers. She said it is a two week lay over before it would be final and it still my not pass at the end.

Mr. Creekbaum said if it pass at the second and final adoption than yes, the City will have a hocky team. He said it will be in consideration at the next Council meeting on June 25th.

Rev. Linda Johnson, 119 South Pointe Drive, said that she has grandchildren, and she would love to know more about hockey before it comes into existence.

Mr. Jeff Guerriero, 220 Forsythe Avenue, from a business standpoint he has brought a lot of different events to Monroe, because he is Pro Monroe. He said that this is an opportunity for Monroe to grow from an economic perspective. He said that this business being here would allow for our kids to stay in Monroe and learn videography, photography, or how to run a business. This is a great opportunity for Monroe, he wants to give them a chance to be in Monroe.

Mr. McFarland wanted to know when did the Chairman found out about it.

Mrs. Ezernack said the Council received an email about the press conference that was coming up.

Mr. McFarland asked was she not involved in the negotiations to ask your questions and concerns. He said the people of District 4 elected him to have a seat at the table and he wants a seat at the table on this matter. He said if the Council see fit that he shouldn't have seat at the table all is well.

Mrs. Ezernack said that she wanted to make one clarification as far as the Council's responsibility and contracts go, we are not in on the negotiations, that is the Administrative function. She said that the Council functions is to ask questions about it. She said that they are not at the table during these discussions, which is probably for confidentiality purposes, that's why at that particular point is why it came to the Council then. She said that we all received notification about it at the same time. She said this is introduction only and may not pass when the final comes up.

Mr. McFarland said that if the Mayor wanted to introduce this he should have explained what was going on. He said that it is a level of respect.

Mr. Tony Little, 1315 Forsythe, wanted to know if there is a confidentiality clause in the contract.

Mr. Creekbaum said that there is a provision in the agreement that governs the dissemination of confidential information that tracks Louisiana public records, there are no other provisions addressing confidentiality.

Mr. Little said that he understands that it's the Administration role to negotiate contracts, but if this was his personal business there would be 20 more things that he would add to this contract, because he is not trying to kill hockey. He said that his main concern is that these are taxpayer's dollars, and, in the end, we should call a spade a spade. He said what we are really doing is subsidizing a team, when you do your due diligence with the 13 hockey teams they profited about \$230,000.00 dollars last year. He said that it has been plagued with financial instability. He said we should look at it and say we are going to subsidize the team and what are the cost. He also said local people who pay taxes in the city, when they rent the Civic Center they pay full rent, and they live in the City, but now there is a team coming and we are about to give them a discount. He said we should just give them an incentive package and look at doing it for everyone. He said it's not fair that we can do it for the team and not everyone. He said we should look to make sure they have all the correct insurances before we approve this. He said if it will bring jobs and create jobs and improve the quality of life, he is 100% for it. He said that he wants us to get this right.

Mr. Brian, West Deborah Drive, stated he was an educator for several years in the Ouachita Parish School System and one of the things he heard his students say was that they didn't think there is a future in Monroe, they didn't have anything to do in Monroe either. He said that bringing this hockey team here will give the children a future and something to look forward to in life here in Monroe.

Ms. Woods stated for the record, for all of you that out in the audience that are for or against, her position on this matter was that she did not know and to hear the news media say that it has been in the works for a year and when my phone rings, she has a responsibility and obligation to her constituents. She said she represents 10,000 people. She said that if they start calling me and I have no answers then something is wrong with this picture. She said that we are talking about taxpayer's dollars. She said that she has no problem with hockey, her issue is how it was handled. She felt like as an elected official that she should have known before the huge announcement, just a simple conversation would have sufficed. She said that this is not the hockey team's fault. She just believes that there should have been a conversation first. She said that her objection is not against the team, just how it was done. Putting the cart before horse.

(b) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance approving an application by the Wellspring Alliance to rezone certain property and amending the Zoning Map for the City of Monroe and further providing with respect thereto.

Mr. Rodney McFarland, 1017 Ouachita Avenue, asked Mr. Creekbaum if this was going to be in the Jackson Street area.

Mr. Brandon Creekbaum, City Attorney, answered Polly Street and Railroad Avenue.

Mr. McFarland asked if it's off Jackson Street. He said that it appears that they want to build more halfway houses in the Jackson Street area.

Mr. Creekbaum said these requests come from the Planning & Zoning Commission and are application-based requests. He said it is then placed on Planning & Zoning's agenda to be voted on and once it gets approved it goes on the next available Council meeting agenda. He believes the applicant will explain the purpose of the rezoning.

Mr. McFarland said that it appears that they are building more halfway homes in District 4 which he will be representing. He said that he doesn't believe that the constituents are aware of what is getting too ready to take place with this rezoning. He said that he wants to hear from Wellspring, but he wishes he could have been at the table for this rezoning.

Mr. Harvey said that he gets a lot of calls about the halfway houses, sober living houses, and the Council does not regulate those houses.

Mr. Creekbaum explained the process of the Planning & Zoning Commission, he said that Wellspring is going to come up and explain the purpose of the rezoning for their property. He mentioned that Councilwoman Woods has been at a few Planning & Zoning Commission meetings. Wellspring had a public hearing in May where this particular project was discussed. The representative of Wellspring is about to explain again the reason for needing rezoning for their organization. He also said that the Wellspring is designed to assist people dealing with domestic violence shelter and the other one is families dealing with homelessness, so this is a family structure organization.

Mr. McFarland said that he is going to reserve his questions for the Council after he hears the representative speak.

Ms. Caroline Casio, 1515 Jackson Street, Representative of Wellspring, appreciates their concern for the expedition of the matter. She said they are required in order to be eligible for a \$2 million dollar funding award to have the property properly rezoned by June 30th which is why there is such a time sensitive issue. She said that this is not a halfway house, they have never dealt with those at all, they specialize in substance abuse. They have a domestic violence shelter that is outdated, that needs to be replaced for many reasons. She also said that they do not have shelters in Monroe that are for families of homelessness. She said that homelessness in our community is very largely consistent of families and there isn't a place for them to go. This is the reason why we are seeking for rezoning the property. She said that they already own these properties and the contiguous property 1515 Jackson Street where our headquarters are located. Across Holly Street

is City of Faith already zoned B3 and that is what we are asking for. She said Mayor Gerald Brown who sits on their board reached out to Councilman Marshall so that there would be no surprises. She said again that this is a time sensitive issue, and they are seeking to create and solve some tremendous needs in our community.

Mr. McFarland thanked the Council that this was not a halfway house, he is relieved. He said communication is the key and goes a long way.

Ms. Karen Gant, 2411 Woods Street, wanted to know the first application date.

Ms. Caroline Casio answered April 28th.

Ms. Gant asked when you discovered that your funding was about to end.

Ms. Casio said that they have the opportunity to apply for funding to build a shelter.

Ms. Gant asked if the application has to be turned in by June 30th or does everything have to be approved by the 30th.

Ms. Casio answered that June 30th is the deadline for which the federal home loan bank requires proper zoning for the project to be approved. She had already submitted the application.

Ms. Gant asked what the process was to get to this point, what all that did entail.

Ms. Casio answered that she had to go through Planning & Zoning Committee, they had to review her application, representatives from her organization had to be at the meeting. After it was approved from them then it was recommended to be brought before the Council.

Ms. Gant asked so the process was from April until now.

Ms. Casio answered yes. She didn't know what the process was, so she had to call and ask. She said that she is not in the business of Planning & Zoning, she works in the nonprofit field, this was a new process for her.

Ms. Gant said she wanted to see the timeline on the processes.

Mr. Gene Tarver, 1701 McKeen Place, said he knew Ms. Casio's predecessor and they were able to help Wellspring and they do an outstanding job in the city of Monroe on the south side by providing homes and shelter for people who so desperately need it. He said when referring to the timeline, that occurs when dealing with grants, there is a time that you have to have things in place in order to receive federal funding. He believes that Ms. Casio's efforts should be rewarded by voting in favor of this rezoning project.

Mrs. Dawson thanked Ms. Caroline and she said she has been referring Wellsprings for years.

Ms. Casio said that it is an honor to do the work.

Ms. Tonia Freeman, 6315 Cypress Point Drive, wanted to know if there will be something for individuals that are homeless as well.

Ms. Casio said that right now the Salvation Army currently has beds for individuals who are homeless. Persons that experience homelessness have to go through a coordinated entry process, that means they prioritize and process according to their individual needs, that when you work with the Home Coalition. The appropriate resource is to be determined through the coordinated entry process. So, if it's a family with young children for example, they can't go to the Salvation Army, because they can't accommodate the young children. If it's a mother with a teenaged son, they can't be housed together, our purpose is to keep families together. She said several months ago, when funding had run out for Rapid Rehousing, some of the financial assistance we were able to provide for those who were at risk of being homeless or already homeless. There was a total of 15 families with a total of 51 children that had no place to stay, now that is not acceptable in our community.

Ms. Woods told Ms. Casio that she appreciates everything that she does, because she has come into contact with many who need those services. She asked how many families this new facility is going to be able to house.

Ms. Casio answered that the shelters for families that experience homelessness are to have 15 units to accommodate up to 60 people. She said that lately what they've seen are very large families,

families with eight children. They are having it designed so that they can have adjoining rooms for larger families. She said for the domestic violence shelter they need a non-congregate shelter, a safe place for domestic violence survivors needing a safe place where they can drive and park their car so that it's not in plain sight. They just need many things to ensure their safety while they are with them. The total units would be 13 that can hold up to 60 people.

Ms. Linda Johnson said she worked at City of Faith Housing inmates that was next door to the Wellspring and they are an excellent organization.

(c) Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson, seconded by Mr. Harvey and approved to Introduce an Ordinance establishing Purchasing and Bidding Procedures for the City of Monroe and further providing with respect thereto. (Ms. Woods Nay)

Ms. Woods motion to remove item (c) from the agenda until the new Council is seated.

Mr. Brandon Creekbaum, City Attorney, stated Mrs. Dawson has a motion on the floor to adopt.

Mr. McFarland stated what the City is trying to do now is to make this law that the Mayor has power to award bids under \$250,000.00 without the Council's approval. He said after reading this and trying to digest all this language the attorney has put in it. He said it kind of states that each year the \$250,000.00 grows and he wanted to know if the Chairman was aware.

Mrs. Ezernack said yes and it's in the Statute.

Mr. McFarland wanted to know if the Chairman was aware the previous Mayor \$33,000.00 had to be brought before the Council but under this Mayor, the present Council voted that he has the right to award any contract that is under \$250,000.00 which is a resolution. He said tonight the Council is trying to introduce a law on the City of Monroe that he can give these contracts out to whoever he desires and as long as it's under \$250,000.00. He said the Council has to read the language in the Ordinance which states it will go up automatically without the Council vote.. He said they are moving something from a resolution to now become city law and introducing it tonight because there is one more Council meeting before the new Council come in. He stated it is affecting the constituents of this city and the reason the Council is doing this is because it's hard to change an ordinance. He said it's wrong what the Council is doing and to leave it as a resolution to let the new Council deal with these matters. He said be not deceived, God is not mocked to whatsoever man soweth, that shall he also reap.

Mrs. Dawson stated for the record a year ago when the Council brought this item as a resolution the Council had talked about bringing as an Ordinance. She said the Council saw how it benefited the City and were able to move projects faster. She said she had no complaints from any constituents, and she noted this is something great for the City. She said the City have been moving project and getting information from purchasing. She said when contracts come through the Council get that information. She said there is nothing not being transparent, and she thinks it's a great move.

Mrs. Ezernack noted for clarification the language about the increase comes out of the Louisiana State Statute and that is the public bid law.

Ms. Woods noted with the previous administration she doesn't recall it going up annually.

Mrs. Ezernack stated it doesn't start until 2025.

Mr. Creekbaum noted when the State moved the limit to \$250,000.00 the State added it to law. He said it's in 3822 12 section C1 and they put in the annual CPI increases. He said under the old public bid law there was no annual and the old contract amount the Council did not follow but set a different policy for local matters.

Ms. Woods wanted to know if the City was at \$50,000 it be applicable as well.

Mr. Creekbaum stated that would be a completely different ordinance or resolution than what is being presented before the Council tonight.

Ms. Woods wanted to clarify that one reason this is applicable is because it's at \$250,000.00.

Mr. Creekbaum said no, the ordinance that is being presented ties the City to what is the State bid law.

Ms. Woods stated for clarification that the City wants to do exactly as the State bid law.

Mr. Creekbaum said yes, and this is what the ordinance proposes at least with respect to the contract limit.

Ms. Woods said how many people are in the City and the State of Louisiana, and the City is going to increase it. She stated she is trying to understand, and she said the City is patterning themselves after the State of Louisiana at something as crucial as this. She said the City is just giving authority away and it is mind boggling to her that when the City had another administration it was \$30,000.00. She said the vote from the Council was to bring it down to \$15,000.00 and the City is steadily giving this administration the authority for more and more. She said she doesn't know if it's quite as transparent and she would like to see everybody that has gotten an award. She wanted to know when this actually passed in the resolution.

Mr. Creekbaum stated the resolution was passed in June of 2023.

Ms. Woods wanted to know from June until October no one got any money under this bid law.

Mr. Creekbaum said he thinks that was in a previous report Mr. Curt Kelly, Director of Purchasing, may have done. He said he thinks this was the second buy annual which covers a six month period.

Ms. Woods stated she doesn't see Mr. Kelly to ask, and she would like to get an all-inclusive on this, please.

Mr. Creekbaum noted he is sure that is absolutely possible.

Mr. Roosevelt Wright, 2406 Oak Street, stated he raised in opposition to this ordinance primary because of what Mr. Creekbaum said and he further stated the City is not compiled to tie themselves to State law. He said by tying themselves to State law it's using an escalator factor in which ties to every year it will go up by the consumer price index. He said the CPI goes up somewhere between 2.4 and 3.3 percent every year and in ten years that \$250,000.00 will be out like \$310,000.00 and keep going up. He noted he suggest if the Council do that the City needs to make sure it doesn't turn into an agency where people in power can reward people who support their campaigns. He said to put some limitations on because otherwise the City will have pool where they can pass money. He said it is illegal to receive contributions from anybody that are voted on their contracts, but this allows that to happen. He said when the City bypass the bid process it locks out the requirements for DBE participation and it's not by law. He said when the bid process is bypassed minorities kind of get left out and they are at the good will of the Mayor. He said in the last four years that has not been too well for minorities, and he thinks the Council should lower it to \$30,000.00 to have complete visibility. He said the Council's responsibility is to watch the money.

Ms. Sonya Jacobs, 1700 University Avenue, stated they had an extreme discourse about this very issue and the problem was the lack of inclusions of small businesses in this area. She said small businesses that are represented in the African American community and the promise was the City will include when the City increase from \$30,000 to the \$250,000.00 threshold. She said they have not seen that plan implemented or the results if there have been proper execution. She noted Mrs. Dawson stated there were no complaints from her constituents and Mr. Alton Brooks a member of District 5, and he has complained on multiple occasions.

Mrs. Dawson wanted to know to whom.

Ms. Jacobs addressed Mrs. Dawson to say she said there were no complaints.

Mrs. Dawson noted he didn't complain to her.

Ms. Jacobs stated maybe she needs to talk to him.

Mrs. Dawson said maybe he needs to reach out to her, and she hasn't heard from him.

Ms. Jacobs said he reached out to her, and she complained on his behalf, but it fell deaf ears.

Mrs. Dawson said she didn't call her about what was said.

Ms. Jacobs said she talk to Mrs. Dawson in length about it.

Mrs. Ezernack said the Council is not going to argue this point.

Ms. Jacobs noted they have not seen inclusion at this time and \$250,000.00 the City is not bound by the State. She said the State is doing a lot of things and the City is lagging behind, and she don't see the City following in that direction either. She said the State has a more robust plan of DBE inclusion which she doesn't see implemented either. She said the Council is making some unparallel unprecedented moves and it is not benefiting the betterment of the entire community. She said they ask that the Council relent and do this the right way.

Mr. Muhammad stated the Council has stacked this agenda tonight and that's why they are still here. He said he doesn't know if the City is operating legally, and he wanted to know what the City will do with the resolution that's already out there.

Mr. Creekbaum stated an ordinance is superior to a resolution under law.

Mr. Muhammad wanted to know if the resolution has been rescinded and he doesn't know if the City brought it to the Council properly.

Mrs. Ezernack said noted the legal team brought it to the Council.

Mr. Harvey said there is a line in the ordinance that rescinds the resolution, and the language of the ordinance takes care of the resolution.

Mr. Harvey noted the language of the ordinance takes care of the resolution.

Mr. Creekbaum stated the last section of the ordinance states this ordinance hereby appeals and supersedes any prior ordinances or resolutions governing the same subject matter.

Mr. Muhammad asked if the resolution wasn't strong enough.

Mr. Harvey stated Mrs. Dawson already talked about the intent as far as back a year later.

Mr. Muhammad said he isn't clear, and he said he is asking the Chairman.

Mrs. Ezernack reiterated Mrs. Dawson comments that the if resolution was working the City would bring it back as an ordinance. She noted Mrs. Dawson was the Chairman at the time it was passed.

Mr. Muhammad wanted to know why it is being brought back now as an ordinance and if this is the recommendation to the Council.

Mr. Creekbaum stated he provides legal advice to the Council. He said the law and the charter recognize an ordinance as superior in all respects to a resolution.

Mr. Muhammad wanted to know why not bring it as an ordinance first. He said the Council needs to turn the ordinance down tonight. He said Bishop McFarland and himself are questioning why at this juncture and if it wasn't proper then wait. He said it seems the Council wanted to get it through now and attach the CPI where it can run rapid, that's a problem.

Mr. Creekbaum stated for clarification the CPI was in the original resolution and the intent was to track the bid law as closely as possible.

Mr. Muhammad said that didn't answer the question.

Mr. Harvey stated it has been answered a couple times and it doesn't seem he would be satisfied with the answer.

Mrs. Dawson said that is what the Council said they would do in the beginning because if didn't work the Council could bring it back down.

Ms. Kenya Roberson, 116 Glenwood, said when the Council introduced the resolution there was a long line of people just as it is tonight. She said they voiced their concerns, begged, and plead and got nowhere then and she said it doesn't seem like their getting anywhere tonight. She said it saddens her because every day she sitting behind a desk listening to business owners and it's disheartening to tell them unfortunately even if she voice it will not be listened to. She said the list of the people who have actually received contracts she could count on her toes how many look like her. She said if she was representing a duck she wouldn't be okay with that no matter what color they were, and she would want it to be fair representation diversity across the board. She said she knows they would say they aren't qualified, or they don't have the certification; well, she would need to teach them. She said she would need to reach out to the people who are talking to

them and helping them on a day to day basics that they are ready, which has not been done. She said if the Council is tired of hearing it the only way to stop it from being heard is to do something about it. She said the City can quote law all day long, but they know it is not fair across the board and if the Council continues to take it up they are not going to be able to meet that and the Council knows. She said why continue to go up when the people are saying they're not getting now. She said how do the Council sit on the principles they run on during the election to say it will be diverse and inclusion but when reality sets in it's not. She said she only gets upset about a few things because she represents those people just like the Council have a job to do so does she. She stated to the next Elect Council the solution is to have some round tables, listen, and have funding and training trickling down into the organizations to get their people ready.

Mr. Tony Little, 1516 Forsythe, addressed Mr. Creekbaum to clarify if it really matters if it's a resolution or an ordinance. He noted the Mayor can do with a resolution what he can do with an ordinance. He wanted to know when this changes into an ordinance will it change anything for the Mayor.

Mr. Creekbaum noted there are legal affects that flow from the existence of an ordinance verses the existence of a resolution. He further noted that what the administration or the Council can and can't do as a matter of policy or performance is not in his realm of expertise.

Mr. Little stated an ordinance has the weight of law and a resolution does not technically have the weight of law, but when passed as a resolution it can be amended. He further stated the Council should maybe look at some kind transition policy because there are two Council Elect and two Council members leaving. He further stated the City is introducing something and fighting over something, but this is the one issue of every issue. He said if the Council waits twenty days it won't affect anything yes or no.

Mr. Creekbaum said yes, one carries the force and effect of law, and the other one is an expression of former will. He said appreciates the questions and being able to explain the legal affects. He stated Mr. Little has been the Chair of the Southside Economic Development District (SEDD) which is also held into the City's policy and procedures when it comes to procurement and policy. He said as a representative of an entity that also deals with being able to move projects within SEDD he thinks this will have the same effects for the organization that it would for the City.

Mr. Little noted his point is the City is doing this because they want to do it. He said they are saying they want to work together, and some people are saying they are threatening. He said there are some people up there he highly respect and expect them to do the right thing, but the Council will do what they want. He said a resolution doesn't matter and the City can amend a resolution. He said with \$250,000.00 the Council doesn't have to do it, but they can do it. He said all he is simply saying is he doesn't personally have a problem with the Mayor having \$250,000.00. He said the City needs to move forward and there was just another murder and issue with crime. He said the City is being tone deaf as the feelings of the community and they are talking about an issue most of the community don't care about. He said they care about their neighborhoods being safe. He said this has to be done tonight because it's a political issue because it doesn't matter if it's an ordinance or resolution not to the point it has to be done right now.

Ms. Mondarian Douglas, 5513 Long Drive, said she is bothered the Council is in a rush to handle the City business and if it was 10:45 she would be okay because she knows it's under careful watch. She said she thinks she heard a brother say point of order and he was told he was out of order. She thanked God for the City's advocator that are advocating for them to make sure the Council uphold what they are supposed to do. She said the City of Monroe is represented by the Mayor and the Council represents the citizens. She said the Council answers to the citizens and Mr. Creekbaum shouldn't be answering for the Council if they had read the ordinance. She said the Council is getting paid every month and that's a nice payment for a quick meeting for people to not be doing their homework.

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

Mr. Harvey stated for the record once the Council comes out of the public hearing, relative to the Special Election, he would motion to amend the twenty-five year period verse perpetuity.

Ms. Woods stated before the public hearing she would like to amend the ordinance to not include using these tax dollars for public buildings.

Mr. Creekbaum noted the procedurally the way to handle this would be to pull the public hearing because it is technically on agenda first. He said he thinks Mr. Harvey has already stated a public intention once the City come out of the public hearing.

Ms. Woods noted hers is the same thing.

Mr. Creekbaum noted he thought Ms. Woods was trying to amend it now.

Ms. Woods stated wanted her amendment to read the same way as Mr. Harvey's.

Mr. Creekbaum said two Council members have publicly stated their intention that once the public hearing is concluded, separate amendments will be offered. He said Mr. Harvey has stated he would likely propose an amendment changing it from perpetuity to twenty-five year period. He said Ms. Woods stated an intention to propose an amendment that would remove the language that allows it to be used on public buildings.

Ms. Woods stated wanted to remove the language to build public buildings.

Mr. Creekbaum recommended the Council to entertain the public comments as they do at any public hearing. He said when the Council comes out they would take the amendments one by one and let them raise or fall as they go.

The Chairman open the public hearing

(Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mrs. Dawson and approved an amended Ordinance No. 12,220 Ordering and Calling a Special Election to be held in the City of Monroe, State of Louisiana, to authorize the rededication, levy and collection of a special tax therein; making application to the Louisiana State Bond Commission and providing for other matters in connection therewith. (Ms. Woods Nay.)

Mr. Verbon Muhammad stated that was out of order and the Council was making amendments without a motion. He said he doesn't want to know what the Council is amending right now.

Mrs. Ezernack noted the Council isn't amending anything at this moment and the Council is in a public hearing.

Mr. Muhammad said is asking the Council to not act on this because they are here at Council now wanting to make amendments. He said it is suggesting to the public that it's clear as mud.

Mr. Harvey noted by stating his intent before the public hearing was to try and be very transparent with his intent.

Mr. Muhammad said just pull it back and bring it to the people properly.

Mr. Rodney McFarland, 1017 Ouachita Avenue, stated the public came before the Council two weeks ago, and they pleaded their case which fell on deaf ears. He said the Council can't believe that everybody is either ignorant or dumb that they don't see what's going on here. He further stated those that have read the language know the Council is trying to have the election for this tax that will not expire until 2029 on December 7th. He said not even on the presidential election because the Council know more African Americans will come out during the presidential election. He said the Council don't even want the by in of the new Council members that are coming, and this is not a threat, this is facts. He said he is the voice of the people, and the people listen to him. He said some took him for a joke; said Mr. Muhammad and himself weren't going to make it, but they're here because the people spoke. He said if the Council decides not to involve them and moves forward with this he will fight hard to defeat it. He said when the Council thinks his people aren't going to vote there will be a great movement. He said now the Council is trying to give them a little something by saying it will be twenty-five years and still it's not right for this Council to make this decision. He said the City have sat around and had conversations about who the Council is scared of, and he said they don't need to be scared of Mr. Muhammad or him because they are going to do what's right for the people. He said the people wanted a change and they would be the change for the City. He said if the Council's desire is to not allow the Council Elect to be a part of this he will do all he can to make sure the tax is defeated.

Mr. Roosevelt Wright, 2406 Oak Street, stated he rose in opposition to this tax and the way it is being presented. He said he is aware of some of the amendments, but he would like to address it. He further stated in the early in the 1900s he was a part of a political organization that met on Sunday night to talk about how they wanted to improve the streets of the city. He said they invited

in Mayor Robert Powell, and they came up with agreement that he would fix the City streets. He said all the streets in South Monroe were dusty and rocky and some streets were being paved but the City was imposing the taxes of the property owners to help pay for it. He said as a result they came up with a tax proposal for a one cent sales tax designed to fix and pave the Southside, but it ended up being the entire city. He noted the one cent sales tax was supposed to last ten years to pave every street and alley in Monroe which was done. He said it would accumulate enough funds so as the years go by there would be funds to fix those streets as infrastructure underneath starts to tear away. He said in 2001 three years before the ten years ran out the new Mayor Rambin came in opened it back up and watered it down. He said he watered down by adding in police stations, fire Stations, and operations of the water plant which means there was less money available to fix the streets. He said now the City is about to open it again five years before it runs out and plan is to water it down some more. He said only twenty-five percent is going to be used for streets and the City is going to add in fire stations, police stations, acquisition of properties, water operations and public buildings. He said the money used to fix the street will decrease and he said at the last Council meeting the city engineer talked about how the streets were beginning to go bad. He said if the City waters down the funds that are supposed to fix the streets the people on their side end up paying for it and they are trying to get their ditches closed in. He said the funds to do it with is that fund and he suggested it go back to being the street fund because now those streets are getting old. He noted it was a one cent sales tax to maintain the streets of the City of Monroe and he said he has feeling when the money runs short the Southside is going to pay for it.

Mr. Gene Tarver, 7801 Frances Place, noted when he read the ordinance he had two reservations one was about the future which Mr. Harvey offered an amendment to change that to a date. He said his other concern was indicated by the expansion of provision to the Public Works area which was another amendment to change that was mentioned.

Ms. Woods said no, she talked about public buildings.

Mr. Tarver stated he was a part of the original Council when the City did the streets, and it was focused entirely on streets because they were in horrible condition. He said the streets were in horrible condition because the City was paying through the assessment against property owner. He said it wasn't working because many of the property owners on the Southside simply couldn't pay for the improvements of the street. He said they supported the Mayor's recommendation, and it worked very well but it was changed under Mayor Rambin administration. He said this is going to be coming up for a vote this fall, and He said voters support a proposed tax and tax renewal based on their perception of the people who are in office. He said election matter and the last election voter spoke and they indicated they wanted some change. He said he is trying to state a word of caution in the Council's proceedings, and he listened to the effort to postpone until the next two Council members take office. He said the City has been important to him his entire life and he is concerned about the direction it is going. He said he hope all thing workout and he pray to God things work out.

Mr. Tony Little, 1315 Forsythe, said the bible talks about getting wisdom, knowledge, and a good understanding. He said some of the Council have been here because they are wise and knowledgeable and by now the Council should have a good understanding. He noted there has been a tremendous amount of progress made in the last four years and the City just came off an election where the Mayor was elected by sixty something percent. He said two Council members ran unopposed and the two Council Elect got about sixty something percent of the vote. He said the City is in a situation where this tax could easily be worked out but the way it stands, it cannot be supported. He said taxes are hard to pass and the public is not going to support a new tax.

Mrs. Ezernack noted it is not a new tax.

Mr. Little said with all due respect it is a new tax because the old tax does not run out until 2029. He said no matter how the Council say it, it will be branded as a new tax. He said majority of the people will not support it. He said wisdom and knowledge would wait, but on December 7th the Council will have an understanding.

The Chairman closed the public hearing seeing no one come forward.

Upon motion of Mrs. Dawson, seconded by Mr. Harvey and approved an ordinance Ordering and Calling a Special Election to be held in the City of Monroe, State of Louisiana, to authorize the

rededication, levy and collection of a special tax therein; making application to the Louisiana State Bond Commission and providing for other matters in connection therewith.

Mr. Harvey wanted to know how the Council was supposed to vote the amendments in.

Mr. Creekbaum stated if there are going to be composed amendments he recommended Mrs. Dawson remove her motion for final adoption at this time.

Mrs. Dawson withdrew her motion.

Mr. Harvey motion to adopt the ordinance with the time period removed from perpetuity to twenty-five years commencing upon the expiration of the current tax.

Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mrs. Dawson approved an amended Ordinance No.12,220 Ordering and Calling a Special Election to be held in the City of Monroe, State of Louisiana, to authorize the rededication, levy and collection of a special tax therein; making application to the Louisiana State Bond Commission and providing for other matters in connection therewith. (Ms. Woods Nay)

The Chairman open the public comment.

Mr. Creekbaum stated for clarification the public comment on whether or not the Council should adopt the amendment to remove the language from perpetuity to twenty-five years commencing upon the expiration of prior tax. He noted he believes it will be January 1, 2029, what is likely stated in the call

Mr. Muhammad wanted to know if the motion was being made from what is on the agenda.

Mr. Harvey noted the motion was made to amend the ordinance presented as a period of perpetuity and he has requested it be moved to twenty-five years.

Mr. Muhammad wanted to clarify if Ms. Woods had an amendment.

Mr. Creekbaum noted the recommendation was to take them each separately because they deal with two different matters.

Mr. Muhammad stated the Chairman heard the people and the Council needs to get this right. He said if voters and taxpayers are going to vote on this they are confused, and he is confused. He further stated he thinks the motion needs to be stated clearly and the Council is about to amend it again.

Mr. Creekbaum clarified that Mr. Harvey's motion is currently on the table and the City is in public comment period on Mr. Harvey's motion. He said when Mr. Harvey's motion either passes or fails then Ms. Woods will make her motion which will go through the same procedure. He said if there are no more proposed amendments the Council will read the proposed ordinance as it has been amended and the Council can choose to move for final adoption of that ordinance.

Ms. Woods wanted to know if her amendment doesn't get a second does it die.

Mr. Creekbaum noted that is correct.

Mr. McFarland stated this is a fact, not a threat, but he will master policy and procedures. He said all that is being said some is true and some of it is false, but it will be straightened out after July 1st. He said for the Council that is left that they should make sure to read Robert's Rule of Order because that's what the Council will be going by. He said secondly they are pleading with the Council, and they will have a failed tax on their hand. He said there will be a movement and others didn't believe him two years ago when he said there is going to be a movement. He said the public will defeat the tax and he said all the talk that has been done doesn't bother him. He said on July 1st he will be there to work for the betterment of the City, and he said if the Council move forward with the movement he will make sure this tax is defeated. He said the Council is trying to get the tax passed before the new Council so they can keep doing what they are doing. He said it is a new day and a new way, but they will have to prove it to the Council.

The Chairman called for the vote on the amended ordinance.

(Mrs. Ezernack aye, Mr. Harvey aye, Mrs. Dawson aye, and Ms. Woods nay.)

Ms. Woods stated she would like to amend the proposition to remove all language pertaining to the use of these funds for construction of public buildings.

Mr. Harvey seconded the motion.

Mr. Muhammad said the Council should get all the amendments for them to vote on the complete amendment. He wanted to know Ms. Woods's amendment.

Ms. Woods stated the part about public buildings and facilities. She said using that tax to build a new building.

Mr. Creekbaum stated that would apply to the revocation of existing buildings and he said by removing that language it would apply more than just the construction of new buildings.

Ms. Woods stated the community centers have a public tax that the City can work on those with correct.

Mr. Creekbaum said there are other funding sources.

Ms. Woods said if the City decided to build a five million dollar tennis club house she doesn't want those dollars to be used for things like that. She said that money doesn't need to be used for that it needs to be used for streets. She said right now Powell Street is blocked off because of a hole that is probably three feet deep.

Mr. Creekbaum stated uses of this tax is at the will of the Council and he is not offering an opinion one way or the other. He said he wanted to make clear this provision itself is broader than construction of new facilities. He said for example if there are existing facilities that are not covered by another tax these funds can be used for that purpose but with the removal of that it goes away.

Mr. Muhammad stated he don't understand the rush and he suggested the Council reword the item and bring it back. He said the Chairman will have to read the final ordinance as amended.

Mr. Creekbaum stated the Council will wait to see what the amendments are and there is one amendment that has passed. He said Ms. Woods amendment is on the table at this point and if the amendment pass or fail he will then read it to the Council Chair.

Mr. Muhammad said then the questions becomes what percentage will go to streets. He said the Council isn't talking about that and the tax is for the streets. He said there is twenty-five percent going to streets and he would like to see it increased. He said he don't see any work being done in South Monroe on streets, but he saw one on Parkview. He said came as a citizen to ask the Council to fix Plum Street underpass, but he guess it fell on deaf ears. He said he is going to have a conversation with the Mayor because he decided he didn't want to be here tonight.

Mr. Roosevelt Wright, 2406 Oak Street, stated he is in support of Ms. Woods amendment, and he said according to the rule of order all the amendments should have been voted on first. He said then the public would have a public hearing after the Council finish amending it. He said it makes more sense to let the administration get with the new Council and get everybody sold on it to have a better chance of passing it. He said it appears somebody is thinking the City needs to hurry before July 1st because once the Council Elect get in their going to wreck up everything. He said the SEDD has twenty-five year plan and a lot of it has to do with closes in ditches and fixing the streets and that is the pool of money they have to get it from. He said they don't need all those other things in there and he is in favor of Ms. Woods motion. He said the new Council may not want these things and he said wouldn't it be strange thing, if the first thing they did when they get in office was to repeal this, but he has a feeling.

Mr. Tony Little stated he has figured out what's the problem and he has tried his best to workout situations privately. He said he thinks this is a big misunderstanding and he found out more with one conversation with Mr. Shafto. He said he think he can bring more clarity and the City really don't know what they are arguing about. He said the City don't want to defeat a tax and stop the progress, but he now understands more. He said the core issue is there are two Councilmen coming on board that are not in loop and the Council is saying they need to move forward. He said he understands why the Council wants to move forward but the people don't understand. He said if they want to move forward then talk to the people that is not going to work.

Mr. West Shafto stated the tax is just a funding source that has been on the books since the 80s. He said the goal is to get the tax renewed this year and the City can't finance any projects with just five years left. He said the Council will determine what projects are funded and he said he knows the tax has a broad purpose but that is to give the City and the Council flexibility if needed. He said the tax itself does not determine what projects are funded and those decisions won't be made until after July 1st.

Mr. Harvey said within each five year Capital Plan the Council adopt each year with the budget. He said it is ultimately voted on by the Council and they talked about it last time they had this conversation.

Mr. Shafto stated these things are done when the City issues bonds and there are no five-year bonds. He said that is why the City is trying to get this renewed this year because they are pass the deadline for November or December. He said he thinks the goal was to get the tax renewed this year so the funding source would be in place. He said the Council can start repaving streets and adopt projects to do infrastructure projects.

Mr. Little wanted to know the application timeline.

Mr. William said the City has to do this now because there are very strict deadlines with the Secretary of State. He said all this happens in advance and the City can't really wait because they still have to get the Bond Commission approval and then make an application to the Secretary of State.

Mr. Little wanted to know if the City has a week at least that maybe the Council can table it or call a special meeting.

Mr. Muhammad stated the Council is saying it won't be forever but why even start it out like that. He thanked Mr. Harvey for bringing it back in line and he said can't support something forever.

Mr. McFarland thanked Mr. Harvey for saying it is a five year plan and he would like to see the plan for the Southside.

Mr. Harvey said it publicly available.

Mr. McFarland said he knows he will get a lot of things July 1st and he doesn't believe twenty-one days will send the City to hell. He said the Council is trying to fast track and it can be held off until the new Council come. He said all of what the Council did tonight was totally out of order.

Mrs. Dawson stated she has an issue with taking out the buildings because at times the City have to use these funds for certain repairs that may happen in the building. She said if the City don't have the money or tax available and the people are going to vote anyway, but they need to know the importance of why.

Mrs. Stacy Rowell, Director of Administration, stated for example it is a million dollar package for community centers to have the ac units upgraded.

Mrs. Dawson said any emergency can happen and the City won't have these funds available.

Mrs. Rowell stated it is a pleather of infrastructure issues and a lot has been put in neglect. He said the City is trying to keep up and still have those things that are still breaking down, needing repairs, or replaced. She said streets will always be an issue but without something to continue to move these projects the City is basically will stay where it's at five years from now.

Mrs. Dawson said it is important for the Council to renew this tax because the City needs to have the tax available for when projects like this occur.

Mrs. Rowell stated the City would be able to start bonding out new funds and it would give the new Council the opportunity to identify projects.

Ms. Woods wanted to know if the part about the buildings and facilities is new language in the ordinance.

Mr. Creekbaum said that was the language included in the 2004 rededication, is not new language.

Ms. Woods said that was not her understanding.

Mr. Creekbaum stated the original language from 2004 rededication contained all seven items and he said he said the original purpose of the tax in 1994 has been explained. He said in 2004 there was an extension and rededication that dedicated some of the funds to repaying the sewer debt and then it added the seven items. He said the City has not added any new proposed areas of use. He said the City removed the sewer dedication to repaying those debts because that no longer exists.

Ms. Woods to clarification if that was because the decent decree went away.

Mr. Creekbaum said all of that is gone away and the proposed ordinance kept the seven areas that were identified in 2004 and extended it for twenty-five years. He said Ms. Woods proposed removal of public buildings and facilities would be subtracting what has already been in effect since 2004.

Ms. Woods stated yes, it would be subtracting, but she is hopeful it will start adding back to the street projects. She said the City has a major infrastructure problem. She said she understands the part about the air conditions because right now the air is out at Marbles. She said the City also have money in place to address the centers.

Mrs. Rowell stated the millage doesn't even cover the operations for the recreation department.

Ms. Woods stated the fact that right now the City need streets and she wanted to know what happens if it fails on December 7th. She said gives her great concern on the tax passing.

Mr. Creekbaum stated the will of the Council at point will be to try a repackage a different tax. He stated he thinks other municipalities and jurisdiction have run into that area.

Mr. McFarland stated the Council shouldn't be deliberating until the Chairman closes out public comment. He said they are going back and forth because that is how the Chairman has allowed the City to conduct themselves tonight. He said this tax and the money of the City and make sure the record is straight and clear that the Council and the new Council will be funding the projects. He said there may be projects funded that may be defunded. He said he has watched on several meetings and time the Mayor wants something the Council find the money. Mr. Muhammad said he thinks there needs to be another amendment to dedicate more than twenty-five percent to the streets.

Mr. Harvey wanted to know if it is statutory.

Mr. Creekbaum noted the history has been said a few times and it has been twenty two years since this was a street only tax.

Mr. Muhammad wanted to know who decided seventy-five percent would go to something else.

Mr. Harvey stated the twenty-five percent was not statutory and that's something the Council ultimately votes on. He said every year when the Council adopts a budget they also adopt a forward looking Capital list.

Mr. Creekbaum noted the Capital Infrastructure Commission is an advisory commission that is charged largely with directing projects and overseeing these funds. He said the ordinance creating the Capital Infrastructure Commission established that twenty-five percent of the proceeds of this tax would go to streets and the Council set by ordinance the twenty-five percent of funds would go toward streets repairs.

Mr. Harvey said the other seventy-five percent that's in that group of projects a lot of the projects are big, and the City know about them.

Mr. Muhammad noted the Council took the tax and it is not doing half of what it supposed to do.

Mr. Harvey said he disagrees, and he said when it was voted again it was decided the uses at that stage.

Mr. Muhammad said he is concerned about the streets and that is what he want to see done.

Mr. Harvey agreed with Mr. Muhammad, and he said his input should be a reflection of the Capital Plan engineering brings to the Council.

Mr. Muhammad said he thinks the City can get through it. He wanted to know if the Council is changing the language is it consider a new tax.

Mr. Harvey stated he is not a lawyer.

Mr. Creekbaum said the proposed uses dictate whether or not it's a renewal or rededication. He said the reason this is nominated as a rededication is because the City is removing the repayment of the sewer. He said pulling back on the new proposal will not make it a new tax.

The Chairman announced a three minute recess at 9:56 p.m.

The Chairman call the meeting back to order at 10:02 p.m.

Mr. Wright said in response to the statements that have been considering the urgency of now; his question is what happens if the Council don't deal with this tonight but deal with it in the month of July. He said all the arguments tonight have all been over one thing that it appears the Council is trying to pass things before the new Council comes knowing they will reverse it. He said it looks like a break down the transition between this administration and the incoming administration. He said they have to be on one accord to pass any kind of tax. He said West Monroe, LA just voted down a tax and if one Council talks against this all people need an excuse not to vote for a tax. He said all the streets are going bad and this needs to be killed to let the new Council rework it and they can come in to fix just the streets. He said the Mayor will not be able to dodge all Council meetings and sooner than later he will have to deal with individuals.

(The Chairman called for the vote: Ms. Woods aye, Mr. Harvey nay, Mrs. Ezernack nay, & Mrs. Dawson nay)

Mr. Harvey stated he voted to consider the amendment but the project the City just did they wouldn't have had the funding if they didn't have this. He said it is not an expansion of scope.

The Chairman read the amended ordinance for final adoption.

Ms. Woods stated for the record that her concern is why the rush to pass this tax. She said her further concern is what happens when this tax fails December 7th and with that being said she voted nay.

(Mrs. Dawson leaves the Council Meeting 10:09 p.m.)

Citizen's Participation:

(1.) Mr. Lester G. Paster, South Pointe Drive Apt. 301, stated he wanted to discuss his Civil Rights Violation and he was locked up Wednesday for putting signs on City property. He said that no politician has been arrested for putting their signs on the property, but the city has embarrassed not only the State of Louisiana, but the United States. He further stated he is asking his Councilwoman Kema Dawson that he get equal protection of the law. He said Code Enforcement moved his signs and he caught them. He said when he got out of jail he went to the City to see if they had his sign, Code Enforcement, and parish that said they didn't have them. He said he went Monday told them somebody saw them take the signs and they told him to park in the back to get the signs. He said that he has the right let the world know that Monroe, Louisiana does not follow the Rules of Law.

(2) Mr. Rodney McFarland, 1017 Ouachita Avenue, stated to the that it is not right for her to tell the constituents don't talk as if they are children. He said that Council meetings will be Council meeting on July 1st, and it seems Council meetings are the Mayor Meetings with him being absent. He said Mr. Creekbaum is the Attorney, not the parliamentarian and the Council should read and understand everything that was going to happen tonight. He said that he did his homework and some of you did not, which is shameful. He said that if it takes all day or night, you're getting paid for this job, don't ever tell somebody that comes to the podium to make it quick, you're getting paid.

(3.) Ms. Brenda Joyce Williams, 502 Carlton Avenue, said a was taken several weeks ago for the ribbon cutting of the new OMCAP, now on Royal Avenue. She said several of these folks are the ones that complained about the services being needed on the southside, an anti-poverty agency, servicing 95% black people, seeking among other things to revitalize community, in yet move out of one of those communities. She said don't tell her about it being on the bus route and it still being in District 3. She said there were people standing in line in the cold before City buses begin the day and add insult to injury, if this had happened during Kema Dawson's time as the Director, some of these same folks in this picture would be telling everyone along with the Free Press, that

she was catering to Northside Republicans and Friday Ellis, the hypocrisy of it all. Although they have rebranded the website, she never saw any visible sign up to let folks know that they had moved, because many people still didn't get the message. As a reminder to people who need to pay attention to these same folks that want to talk about black unity, unity in the community when you wanted our votes, but really, they only power and prestige and to be located on the Northside. Remember to wake up and watch out when you are being hoodwinked by the very same people that look like you and act like they care, and they really don't.

(4.) Mr. Tyrone Dickens, K-9, 3004 Dick Taylor Street, He said that he spoke with Ms. Woods about him trying to bring an event to Chennault Park. He said he was told that he needed to get his idea placed on the Council agenda, but he has no idea as to what he needed to do to get that done. He stated is trying to get on the next agenda to have enough time to promote the event.

Mr. Brandon Creekbaum, City Attorney, said that he would get with Ms. Woods to see what all was discussed.

Ms. Woods said that she will get it with Mr. Creekbaum and get it on the agenda.

(6.) Pastor Chipps Taylor said that he stands to offer some love and he announced the Juneteenth Prayer Breakfast Friday, June 14, 2024, at the Greater New Antioch Baptist Church, 301 Sherrouse Avenue, at 9:00AM. He said this breakfast will honor those who have made a difference in this community. He said that Juneteenth is the celebration of freedom. He said that we need to be able to love each other and understand to agree to disagree.

The being no further business to come before the council, the meeting was adjourned at 10:22 p.m., upon motion of Mr. Harvey and it was seconded by Ms. Woods.

Mrs. Gretchen Ezernack
Chairman

Ms. Carolus S. Riley
Council Clerk

Ms. Ileana Murray
Staff Secretary

Mrs. Rachel Washington
Council Coordinator

For extended details on the council meeting please call the Council Clerk Monday-Friday at 318-329-2252 to schedule an appointment to listen to the minute recording.