

Monroe City Council Legal and Regular Session  
September 24, 2019  
6:00 p.m.  
City Council Chambers-City Hall  
MINUTES

There was a legal and regular session of the City Council of the City of Monroe, Louisiana held this date, September 24, 2019 at the Council's regular meeting place, 400 Lea Joyner Memorial Expressway, City Council Chambers/City Hall Building, Monroe, Louisiana.

The Honorable Juanita G. Woods, Chairwoman, called the meeting to order and asked the Council Clerk to call the roll.

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

Council members absent: None.

Chairwoman Woods declared a quorum.

The Invocation was led by designee, MFD, Chief Bronson Moss and the Pledge of Allegiance by Councilwoman Ezernack.

COMMUNICATIONS & SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. Mr. Echols welcomed and thanked each one for their attendance; Mr. Echols commented he has received between thirty to forty phone calls and messages about the enormous trash buildup throughout District 1 and other Districts and do know that other Council members are also getting calls; he asked there would be more progressive communication with the constituency due to the enormous trash buildup and constituents had been accustomed to a two to three week rotation delay, but now we are at five and six, even more weeks than that; he asked that communication concerning trash be conveyed on social media to keep constituents informed; he said there has be a tremendous job done for garbage, but just doesn't have the resources in yet to get the trash picked up. He said there are other issues that continue to perpetuate themselves and asked if Chief could give an update on the current crime statistics and the alarming rate of murders that continue to happen and asked if he could bring information to the Council, so that they could have a broader perspective on where the crime data continues to go; he asked that this be brought to future meetings and or have a public forum so that we can discuss this more vibrantly; he said with the massive issues with flooding and infrastructure, that another update from Ms. Golden and her team about where this process is going with what the Parish is doing; he recognized Mr. Smiley for being present and thanked the Parish for leading the efforts in working on a team based approach with all of the municipalities to ensure we have a proper flood plan going forward; he asked that the city would give an update on what is going on during this time. He asked for more communication of the items he mentioned, and a public open forum would be appreciated and do look forward to working with the Administration to communicate it to constituents.

2. Mrs. Ezernack welcomed and thanked each one for being present to see how government works.

3. Mr. Wilson welcomed and thanked everyone present, and his District 4 constituents; Mr. Wilson commented that he had the opportunity to go down South 4<sup>th</sup> Street, a resident called him, and he met the Monroe Housing Authority Director, Mr. William Smart at New Light Baptist Church and they drove through the area; disappointed seeing debris everywhere that had been there for 2-3 weeks and a water leak that was turned in six weeks ago is still leaking; he said the Monroe Housing Authority is investing four million dollars of building homes in the area and don't see how citizens would want to go down there with all of the debris that's there, some of it is illegal dumping, and what's next; he asked that the trash would be picked up, can't just let it sit there, dogs and then people are going through the trash and it's spreading all over the area; he thanked the investors for putting funds in the area of South 4<sup>th</sup> and do appreciate them for investing in District 4. He said as he rides through South Monroe, that there is debris in the ditches, and in speaking about drainage, the debris is not being picked up out of the ditches and there will be drainage problems. He asked that the citizens help to keep it clean; he asked public works if there was something that could be done, as the tractors, trucks, knuckle booms are broken down and to get this taken care of, because the citizens deserve better. He acknowledged and gave his condolences to Pastor Thomas, as it was his nephew that passed away; Mr. Wilson said he had the opportunity to speak with 12-15 young men, ages 9-16 years old in South Monroe and asked that we would come together and encourage our young men, as they are looking for father figures and for men to be leaders; Pastor Thomas will speak about a meeting that will take place on South 6<sup>th</sup> Street coming up soon.

4. Mr. Clark welcomed each one present; he commented that he wanted to address a serious issue that is taking place in District 5; he asked if anyone from Bryant's Addition, McGee Street areas present at tonight's meeting and thanked them for coming and he asked that those constituents present would sign the list to come and speak during citizen's participation; he said they would do their best to get those constituents from that area some help and to get their issue taken care of; he said he was informed on yesterday of the issue, is that the residents from McGee Street have been without water at least 15-17 times in the last six months, and at least 5 times between last week and this week, the homeowners have been completely without water; they have been without water to bathe, cook, get ready for work, kids getting ready for school, some of the elderly Seniors off of McGee Street have been unable to take care of their personal matters; Mr. Clark said it's an issue that he is asking be looked into with expediency and Ms. Benjamin, Council Assistant contacted some of the constituents and he spoke with some of them on yesterday and the matter was turned in by email to the Administration, Mayor Mayo, Mr. Janway, Director of Public Works and hopefully will get a status on it soon; he said his limited understanding is that the water pipes and the infrastructure are collapsing out there and the City is sending people out there to fix the problem, but it's becoming like a patch job; when one part of the line is fixed, another part of the line collapses or breaks and we just can't have in this day and time residents going without water when we have increased water bills, increased sewer bills and now it is where we must have taxation with representation; he thanked the constituents for coming and look forward to hearing everything that they have to say tonight because the emails and calls were coming so fast and hopefully some type of emergency ordinance can be done if needed, whatever we can do to try to the repair situation to help the you and the residents of Bryant's addition and more specifically McGee street to get your water on and where it can stay on.

Ms. Woods asked if Mr. Sean Benton was present; she asked Ms. Golden if she had spoken with Mr. Janway and Ms. Golden said he was out of town; Ms. Woods thanked Mr. Clark and said she did have some conversation and some of the residents are here tonight as well as Mr. Janway and help is for sure on the way.

5. Mayor Mayo welcomed and thanked each one for attending. He acknowledged Ouachita Parish Police Jury President, Mr. Shane Smiley, as they both serve on the Ouachita Parish of Government (OCOG); there are six on the OCOG which includes two from the Jury, two from City of West Monroe, and two from City of Monroe, and he serves as Chairman of OCOG, and it also includes Ms. Woods. Mayor Mayo spoke about the water shed initiative which involves the drainage and flooding concerns since the 2016 flood, as they have been working on this for a number of years; he commended City Engineer Ms. Golden, Chief Operating Officer, Chief Bryant and Ms. Hill and do appreciate the City and the Ouachita Parish Police Jury, City of West Monroe; he said he wanted to make one small change on it and that they did vote that the Ouachita Parish Police Jury would be the fiscal agent in terms of filling out the application on the initial grant, which is \$400,000 and there is one point of two billion dollars that will be coming down and the mission says that the Ouachita Parish Police Jury and the City of Monroe will be working together, not only in our Parish, but also the other several Parishes in Northeast Louisiana and wanted to make that correction, because the City of Monroe has been working very hard, as have the other political subdivisions; he said he and Mr. Smiley have talked about this quite a bit and he wanted to emphasize this to the public so that the community could know it as well. Mayor Mayo stated he wanted to address some of the concerns and in speaking with Ms. Coleman earlier today regarding their issues with the water; he said there has been some bursting of the collection system all over the city and it has already been communicated to the public about some of the challenges the city has had as a result of the hot weather in some of the areas having a slowness of water pressure and this has been all throughout the City and our folks have been working really hard to address this and do apologize for any inconvenience that may occur, but sometimes those things happen, and don't make excuses; he said the city try to get to it as quickly as can; he reminded the Council members, those that voted for the rate increase and for those that didn't vote for the rate increase, that's why the Administration put it forward, because of the collection system that is so old and dilapidated for so many years; it has been that underground for so long and they just wear out and it's unfortunate, when they wear out those things happen, especially when you are trying to provide water and increase the pressure and those types of things; he said in addition to the water treatment plant, that the \$40 million first phase, the collection system is part of that effort, then the next phase will be about \$20 million, and the total project is about \$60 million which includes expansion of the water treatment plant, a water storage plant that is almost completed now on 165 North and the collection system throughout the City and want to keep emphasizing this, because some people seem to forget that and this is why it was brought before the Council in the first place; he said our people are going to be very diligent in trying to address it and do realize when you have lack of water, there are a lot of things that you can't do, such as bathe and a number of other things and do apologize, but these things do break down every now and then and will be diligent in trying to fix it.

Ms. Woods stated that she did speak with Ms. Coleman and Mr. Major, and glad to know there is resolve coming, to get the issues and challenges taken care of; she said we all know there have been a charge put in place for people that are wanting to take trash, debris, etc. to the land fill and it was said as a result of the fee, that we would see more dumping and is asking that as you see people dumping trash in your community that you will not go out and try to be the police but to take down their tags, a picture of them dumping, see something, say something; someone will be sent out to address the issue; Ms. Woods thanked Mayor Mayo and his Administration for his vision for dealing with the blight in our community, there are initiatives that are being put into place that will address blight in the community; she thanked Chase for the grant to underwrite the cleaning that is going along with the initiative, it is a two part initiative, building communities, a collaboration with Southern University Baton Rouge Business Department, City of Monroe and Mt. Pleasant; they are teaching a twelve week course, to teach individuals to be community developers and it's ongoing, and for those who aren't in it, you are missing a treat, it's too late to join in, but letting you know; the second part of the initiative is creating home ownership and that's being done with the Mt. Pleasant Community, and as the homes are being built and developed by residents in the community, then we will have a pool of people that will be ready to move into the homes; these are not affordable houses, but home ownership. Ms. Woods asked prayers for Mr. Janway, as his wife was involved in a very bad car accident and received word tonight, that she's home and is recovering. She also asked prayers for the City of Monroe, our community, as there are no fingers to be pointed at anyone person, or group in particular, we all live in this community together, and when we have issues and challenges, it impacts all of us; pray for our city and the crimes that have started to happen, that are happening and they are crimes that can't be policed away, no one knows when someone is going to shoot someone in their home or at a funeral parlor; she asked prayers for the victims, the families of the alleged victims, and that we will come together and attend the meeting that Councilman Wilson mentioned, that Rev. Thomas will speak about, it is time for the community to come together and take a stance.

Upon a motion of Mr. Clark and a second by Mr. Echols, the minutes of the Legal and Regular session of September 10, 2019 were unanimously approved. (There were no public comments).

PRESENTATION: NONE.

PUBLIC HEARINGS: NONE.

PROPOSED CONDEMNATIONS: Public Comment: NONE.

ACCEPTANCE OR REJECTION OF BIDS: Public Comment

(a) Upon a motion by Mr. Clark, second by Mr. Wilson and unanimously approved to Accept the bid of Covington Sales for a 700 Gallon Jet Rodder Ref#2020-00000017 as recommended by the Director of Administration as meeting the specifications of this bid. The Vendor meets the specifications of the bid. Funds will be derived from the Sewer Capital Account. The Tax & Revenue Division has confirmed that this bidder is tax compliant. (There were no public comments).

RESOLUTIONS AND MINUTE ENTRIES:

Council: Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Mr. Clark, second by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7553, granting an exception to the Open Container Ordinance to the Mu Tau Chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity (Belles and Beaus) pursuant to Monroe City Code Sec. 12-231 D. (Open Container Ordinance), and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments).

Department of Administration: Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Mr. Echols, second by Mr. Wilson and unanimously approved to Consider an Application by Jason Thomas dba The Hub Music Hall, 201 Washington Street, Monroe, LA 71201 for a New 2019 Class A Alcoholic Beverage Permit. The Monroe Police Department has no disqualifying records and Sales Tax has been Cleared, CO-Cleared, Distance Report Cleared. (There were no public comments).

(b) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Mr. Echols and unanimously approved to Consider an Application by Rigoberto Perez dba Border Mexican Grill, 1304 Lamy Lane, Monroe, LA 71201 for a New 2019 Class A Alcoholic Beverage Permit. The Monroe Police Department has no disqualifying records and Sales Tax has been Cleared, CO-Cleared, Distance Report Cleared. (There were no public comments).

(c) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Mr. Wilson and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7554, authorizing the Mayor to renew AIG Insurance for the Monroe Transit System and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments).

Department of Planning & Urban Development:     Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Mr. Clark, second by Mr. Wilson and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution No. 7555, authorizing James E. Mayo, Mayor, to reduce the insurance requirements from \$1,000,000.00 to \$300,000.00 for small Community Development projects that are less than \$30,000 and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments).

Comments: Mr. Echols asked why the insurance requirements were being reduced; Ms. Downs said it would help the contractors and DBE's acquire less premiums for the jobs; Mr. Echols asked what liability exposure it had to the City and typically the contractor pulls up the policy on the project; Ms. Baldwin said yes, and typically they have the policy of insurance, and some of the jobs are \$12,000-\$14,000, it was a pretty stringent requirement to require them to get a million dollar policy of insurance, and it some of the rehabilitation projects were reviewed and they are so minor, that the city felt satisfied that a \$300,000 policy would protect the City. They have to have \$300,000 for both general liability and a worker's compensation policy; Mr. Echols asked if there was a state requirement for that and Ms. Baldwin said there are certain requirements and HUD has a certain requirement, and some required more, but these are for the very small community development projects; Mr. Echols said he was okay with it as long as it fell within the State statute, as it was confusing, because he understands there are certain requirement for contractors; Ms. Baldwin said she will check, but believes it was a million dollars is part of the purchasing policy approved by Council and didn't have the authority to reduce it without bringing it to Council. Mrs. Ezernack asked if there have been any issues it and if their amounts were more than what was required as the minimum; Ms. Baldwin said they have and that Ms. Downs can speak more on it, as there have been issues with DBE's are awarded the jobs; Ms. Downs said securing the insurance premiums this high and by lowering the premiums will ensure the DBE's and contractors will go through the process of getting the jobs; she said last year someone was awarded a job and it had to be rebid because he couldn't afford the premium. Mrs. Ezernack historically, there hasn't been a claim for any damages, even though it was a higher amount. Mr. Wilson thanked the Administration for looking into it and it's a great step for Monroe.

(b) Upon a motion by Mr. Wilson, second by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to Consider request from Milestone Recovery for a Major Conditional Use Permit authorizing the use of the existing structure (1805 Martin Luther King Jr Drive) for a rehabilitation care facility. The Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance allows a rehabilitation care facility as a Major Conditional Use in the B-3, General Business/Commercial District. Major Conditional Uses are those uses that require another level of approval, therefore this request comes before the City Council for their approval in addition to that of the Planning Commission.

Comments: Mr. Wilson asked for an explanation of the item; Mr. and Mrs. Alex Lewis explained the facility to be a 48-bed drug and alcohol addiction facility for women and will be licensed by the State of Louisiana; 24 hours staffing and be similar to Pecan Haven, Palmetto facilities; this facility will be located to the carwash on 165 South, in District 5. Mr. Clark asked if it was a half way house; Mr. Lewis said it was an ASAN three-point one medical facility that deals with drug and alcohol rehabilitation. Mr. Echols asked if it would be permitted as a medical facility in the permit category; Ms. Poret said it would be permitted as a rehabilitation care facility. Mr. Clark asked for more information; Mr. Lewis said it would be fenced all around perimeter, a 16-camera installed, security 24/7, the cabins will be four beds to a room, 350 feet of room, as they have to meet standards by State fire marshals. Mr. Clark asked if there were pictures and Ms. Poret said they didn't have any, as it has to go through a site plan review, before they build. Ms. Woods asked what the 18 new jobs would be; Mr. Lewis said it would be one doctor hired through them, two counselors, one nurse, and eight techs, along with office staff.

Legal Department:     Public Comment:     None.

Mayor's Office: Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Mr. Echols, second by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution No. 7556, approving and authorizing a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement by and between the City of Monroe and the Friends of Chennault Aviation and Military Museum for the preservation of the Chennault Aviation Museum as per the attached agreement and further providing with respect thereto.

Comments: Ms. Nell Calloway, thanked the Council for their support, because they are no longer a State entity and is proud to report that they have been able to grow and expand; have had over 20,000 visitors annually, and they will be building a \$700,000 aviation park in front of the museum in the next couple of months. Mr. Echols and Mrs. Ezernack thanked Ms. Calloway for their work at the museum, as it is a wonderful jewel in the community; Ms. Woods asked that the community to visit the museum.

Department of Public Works: Public Comment: None.

Department of Community Affairs: Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7557, authorizing James E. Mayo, Mayor, to sign Boundary Maps for 6(f) Designation to satisfy the requirements of certain grants from the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments).

Comments: Mr. Echols asked Ms. Baldwin if it was part of the process that has been worked on for seven or eight years; Ms. Golden said she didn't know how long it has gone on, but it has been a while; Mr. Echols said at lease seven or eight years, maybe longer and asked if it was done; Ms. Golden said they have to figure it out and get it done; Mr. Echols thanked Ms. Golden for stepping up.

(b) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Mr. Wilson and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7558, authorizing James E. Mayo, Mayor to execute an Agreement with the Louisiana Main Street Program as per the attached agreement and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments).

Police Department: Public Comment: None.

Fire Department: Public Comment: None.

Engineering Services: Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Mr. Clark, second by Mr. Wilson and unanimously approved to remove from the agenda to Adopt a Resolution accepting the base bid of \_\_\_\_\_ in the amount of \_\_\_\_\_ for the WTP Ground Storage Tank Rehabilitation Project, and further authorizing James E. Mayo, Mayor, to enter into and execute a contract for said work. (There were no public comments).

(b) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Mr. Clark and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7559, recommending acceptance of the Base Bid of Womack & Sons Construction Group, Inc., in the amount of \$2,086,815.07 for the State Project No. H.013937 Kansas Lane Extension Clearing & Grubbing Project, and further authorizing James E. Mayo, Mayor, to enter into and execute all documents relating thereto, and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments).

Comments: Mr. Echols stated a grubbing project has already been approved, and asked if this grubbing project an extension of that project; Ms. Golden said this was the clearing and grubbing project that was approved and it will do most of the 2.61 miles and there are some big things left for the big project and this is most of the city water and sewer relocated and clear the right-away for Entergy and att.

(c) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Mr. Clark and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7560, authorizing the Purchasing Manager to advertise for bids on the Parkview & Ruffin Drive Water Line Improvements Project. The estimated cost of this project is \$228,756.00. The DBE Goal is 12% and source of funds Water Capital Funds. (There were no public comments).

Comments: Mr. Wilson said he made a request three council meetings ago, to get the name and address of the DBE that was chosen.

(d) Upon a motion by Mr. Wilson, second by Mr. Clark and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7561, authorizing the Purchasing Manager to advertise for proposals for Enterprise Software Program Management Procurement and Implementation. The source of funds Capital Infrastructure Funds. (There were no public comments).

Comments: Ms. Golden explained the software to be a comprehensive integrated software management software system that will enable them to see projects from the conception, design, construction and archive.

(e) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Mr. Echols and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7562, authorizing James E. Mayo, Mayor, to enter into and execute a Professional Services Agreement with Petroleum & Automation Consultants, Inc., to provide Environmental Technical Services for the S.P.N. H.013972 Statewide Flood Control Program Youngs Bayou Retention Project and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments).

Comments: Mr. Echols stated if the city is now talking about taking all of the waste and what was a plan to take the waste out and dispose of it, and assuming to continue to use the 17 acre site as a residual waste retention area, and now talking about using a closed in place strategy, asked why the pivot of strategy; Ms. Golden said it was an oxidation pond that is no longer in service, and it was never contemplated that the oxidation pond would be part of the retention area; the idea was when they dig out the retention area, that dirt would be used to cap the oxidation pond and it saves a million dollars because you have the dirt there to put on the oxidation pond; the oxidation pond need to be closed properly and taken out of service and right now it is one of the highest services of inflow into the sewer collection system identified; there is a flow meter in the area and the difference between no rain and some rain is forty times; Mr. Echols asked what environmental concerns would it pose, if don't come up with another solution. Ms. Golden said it is a lot of water coming into the sewer treatment system that have to deal with at the plant; he asked what happens when the system is overwhelmed, and she said this is when you're outside of your permit limits and this is why looking at the overall INI so that can remain in compliance with the permits of the plant; Mr. Echols asked for the number of gallons that are being processed and sent to the river and Ms. Golden said she would defer those types of questions to the operating department for day to day operational details. Mr. Echols asked if it was about 10-14 million plus gallons and she said it's about that amount; Mr. Echols said on a high rain or water event, asked what was the additional capacity that flows through the system, not meeting the DEQ standards; Ms. Golden said she understands that the plant has a 22 million gallon day capacity and it's when you are north of that, you are working in dangerous territory; Mr. Echols asked what types of rain, weather events does it happen; Ms. Golden said she would defer that to the operations staff for that type of detailed information; Mr. Echols asked if they could come in and report on some of that, and do know that there are some significant concerns with these type issues and having a viable solution to something that is due; Ms. Golden said Council authorized to do an inflow and infiltration study and are doing studies at lift stations and do have a status coming up at the end of October are making quarterly reports to DEQ about the progress of study and have identified areas that were bad. Mr. Echols said he would save his future questions for the next time it is talked about.

(f) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Mr. Echols and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7563, authorizing James E. Mayo, Mayor, to enter into and execute a Professional Services Agreement with PPM Consultants, to provide Environmental Site Assessment Services at the Oxidation Pond Site for the S.P.N. H.013972 Statewide Flood Control Program Youngs Bayou Retention Project and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments).

(g) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Mr. Echols and unanimously approved to Adopt Resolution No. 7564, authorizing James E. Mayo, Mayor, to enter into and execute a Professional Services Agreement with PPM Consultants, to provide Environmental Site Assessment Services at the old City Dump Site for the S.P.N. H.013972 Statewide Flood Control Program Youngs Bayou Retention Project and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments).

Comments: Mr. Echols asked for an explanation on the plans for the old city dump site; Ms. Golden said this environmental consultant would be doing the phases of environmental study to help identify the limits of the former dumping sites; there is an old city dump that has been properly capped and closed, adjacent to the public works area and this is not it; she said in a big swampy area, there are a couple of areas, not long ago when it was not a permitted thing to do, there was an arrangement where it was used as a dump sites in compliance with the law at the time and the law is different now. The dump sites have not been officially closed and it will give them an opportunity to clean up some of the sins of the past and to create some new intention. Mr. Echols asked for the location, and she said there were several and there is a plat that shows it and will send it to Council.

BREAK IF NEEDED:

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS & ORDINANCES:                      Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance amendment to Chapter 37, Zoning, of the Code of the City of Monroe, Article IX Administration and Enforcement, Section 37-131 Violations (d) Penalty to revise the penalties imposed for Ordinance violations. (P&Z) (There were no public comments).

Comments: Mr. Wilson asked for an explanation of the item; Ms. Poret said it was done at the request of the Legal department; Ms. Baldwin said the matters are normally brought to environmental court, and none of the violations that falls under this category has gone to city court since 2008; the fine is \$10 and the violators come to environmental court and is removing that portion of the ordinance. Mr. Wilson asked what was being amended; Ms. Baldwin stated the second page, section d stated, any person found or violated in regulation or provision of this chapter shall be deemed a public nuisance and fined a sum not to exceed \$500 and they all go to environmental court and can also institute daily fines; the jail time is being removed.

(b) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Mr. Echols and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance adopting and amending the Zoning Map for the City of Monroe, Louisiana and authorizing the Clerk to publish notice of a Public Hearing to zone a ±.34 acre tract of land, more or less presently located in Ouachita Parish and more particularly described as follows: **Lots 17 & 18, Square 3, Sherrouse Park Addition, Unit 1 (otherwise known as 206 Darbonne Street)**, APPLICANT: Markus Bosley – (P&Z) (There were no public comments).

(c) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Mr. Clark and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance adopting and amending the Zoning Map for the City of Monroe, Louisiana and authorizing the Clerk to publish notice of a Public Hearing to zone a ±.26 acre tract of land, presently located in Ouachita Parish and more particularly described as follows: **Lot 6, Square 17 of Cole’s Addition (otherwise known as 800 Sterlington Road)**, APPLICANT: T.I.L. Holdings LLC – (P&Z) (There were no public comments).

(d) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Mr. Clark and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance adopting and amending the Zoning Map for the City of Monroe, Louisiana and authorizing the Clerk to publish notice of a Public Hearing to zone a ±1.43 acre tract of land, presently located in Ouachita Parish and more particularly described as follows: **1400 block of Oliver Road**, APPLICANT: NOE Holdings, LLC – (P&Z) (There were no public comments).

Comments: Mr. Echols asked why the 1400 block of Oliver Road wouldn’t be in the city limits; Ms. Poret said it was in the city limits, and are changing the zoning from OS to B3, it has been put on the market and for it to be more marketable it is being rezoned to B3, commercial.

(e) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Mr. Clark and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance adopting and amending the Zoning Map for the City of Monroe, Louisiana and authorizing the Clerk to publish notice of a Public Hearing to zone a ±2.639 acre tract of land, presently located in Ouachita Parish and more particularly described as follows: **1400 block of Oliver Road**, APPLICANT: NOE Holdings LLC – (P&Z) (There were no public comments).

(f) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Mr. Clark and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance adopting and amending the Zoning Map for the City of Monroe, Louisiana and authorizing the Clerk to publish notice of a Public Hearing to zone a ±.79 acre tract of land, presently located in Ouachita Parish and more particularly described as follows: **5321 DeSiard Street**, APPLICANT: Joshua Chambless – (P&Z)

Comments: Mr. Shane Smiley stated he would be the developer on the property, it has been before the commission and has been approved to rezone from R4 to B3 and have support letters from neighbors and businesses in support of it and ask for it to be introduced.

(g) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Mr. Wilson and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance authorizing the City of Monroe to take Corporeal Possession of the property described below and sell to Kenneth Lavall all rights, title and interest that the City may have acquired to Lot 1, Sq. 3, Maryland Addition, Ouachita Parish, District 2, Monroe, La, by adjudication at Tax Sale dated July 1, 2013, and further with respect thereto. (Legal) (There were no public comments).

(h) Upon a motion by Mrs. Ezernack, second by Ms. Woods; Voting YES: Woods, Ezernack; Voting NO: Echols, Wilson, Clark and not approved to Introduce an Ordinance amending Ordinance 10,157, authorizing and levying a fee for each service or transaction of the local field office of the Office of Motor Vehicles of the Department of Public Safety and Corrections in the amount of \$4.50 per service or transaction except for the renewal of the Motor Vehicle Registration License; authorizing the Mayor of the City of Monroe, Louisiana, to enter into an agreement with the Department of Public Safety and Corrections; and otherwise providing with respect thereto. (Legal)

Comments:

1. Mr. James Skipper, citizen, stated the building was owned by the city and leased to the state and felt the lease should cover the maintenance of the building; he doesn't feel the \$1.50 increase should be supported; rates have already been raised for water and sewer, rates at the zoo have been raised; the bus rates have been raised and services have been cut and asked why rates were being raised on the public; he asked that rates not be put on the public and does not support the rate increase.

2. Mr. Ron Phillips, Airport, stated the building is owned by the city and the airport is the custodial of the building; when the building was leased by the state, the city airport was to receive \$3.00 for each driver's license transaction and the revenues were approximately \$150,000; on July 1, 2015, the state implemented a six year drivers license and the number of people to getting licenses was reduced and the revenue went down from \$150,000 to \$85,000; the city is responsible for all fees that go into maintenance, reroofing building, heat, air, janitorial services and this is why requested to increase fees from \$3.00 to \$4.50. Mrs. Ezernack asked if this fee was in lieu of rent, or were they paying rent and the fee; Mr. Phillips said they get a service fee; Mrs. Ezernack said the city doesn't get rent, that the service fee is the rent and Mr. Phillips said, that was correct. Mr. Phillips said agencies across the state are collecting fees at \$4.50 and above, New Orleans and Jefferson Parish collect \$6.00.

3. Councilwoman Woods asked which transactions make up the \$3.00 fees; Mr. Phillips said that the \$3.00 is added to the driver's license costs and it would go up \$1.50 per transaction; Mr. Phillips said the city has invested over \$100,000 in the building maintenance over the last four years and revenues have gone down from \$150,000 to \$85,000; Mrs. Ezernack asked if online transactions impacted the revenue and he said yes, they've seen a drastic cut in revenues, but is responsible for the building. Mr. Wilson stated that he works in the area of the driver license office and he see traffic and lines are backed up; he said and although West Monroe has increased their fees, people continue to go to that office in West Monroe; a lot of fees have been increased already, including transit, zoo and the public is burdened out on fees and this increase is not a dying need and to wait a little while, because there are urgent needs such as drainage, water lines; there have been water and sewer rate increases and has spoken about infrastructure tax and there are holes on Mississippi Street that are four feet deep, and do know that it is sewer that have caved in and this will need to be looked at and can't support another fee on the backs of the people. Mr. Phillips stated that he understood Mr. Wilson's concerns, but the revenues have decreased and the building is ageing, and it has to be maintained, and they have to get some relief in in maintaining the facility; the public expects to go to a facility where comfort is provided and to not have the funds and fees to maintain the facility, then the public will be affected. Mrs. Ezernack stated, normally the rent and other things would have been negotiated into it, and this sounds like it is basically the fees and you're doing everything but going to pick up the people and bringing them to the facility, providing maintenance, janitorial, and this is a full-service lease for three dollars per transaction. Mr. Phillips said they are getting ready to replace the roof at \$35,000, they have replaced the chairs and have painted the facility twice in the last couple of years, have spent a lot of cash. Mr. Wilson asked if the city had a contract with the state, as they are leasing the building and Mr. Phillips said there was an agreement that they would pay the city three dollars per transaction and wanting to go to four fifty, that how the revenue is derived. Ms. Baldwin said the Legislature enacted the law in 1989, and the city adopted the ordinance setting the rate, and the Legislature amended the statute in 2001 and the city adopted the three dollars

rate at that time, passing an ordinance; there hasn't been a fee increase in 18 years, as Mr. Phillips stated about the other cities, she can get information on those cities throughout the state and at least 80-90 percent have increased to the \$4.50 to offset the cost of the repairs, etc. Mayor Mayo said one of the reasons for the increase as Mr. Phillips stated, and when many get their license renewed, unless it is sent off, and he gets pulled out of line by management and take him through the building showing him things that are wrong with the building and since the city owns the building, the city is responsible for addressing it; he said they are only asking for \$1.50 and aren't jumping up and down about fees, but these things need to be done and too often, hear council talk about things that need to be done and if we don't have the funds to do the roof and other things, we have to cut other things to get it done, and it has to be done, or they will move out; he said they are asking for council's help or that they will have to cut something else that may be pretty vital that council doesn't want him to cut and he doesn't want to do that, unless he has to. Mrs. Ezernack asked for clarity, stating, if she goes to renew her driver's license, then this is not affecting her, but if she is doing another transaction at that location, for example registering a vehicle, then the fee would be added on to her cost; any other transaction fee except for renewing the driver's license would have the increased fee attached; Mr. Phillips stated, yes; Mrs. Rowell said the exception was the motor vehicle registration license and not the driver's license.

K-9, citizen, said things have gone up and we must adjust to this stuff, because if you don't what will happen as usual, is there will be a big old empty building sitting there and it will be blamed on someone; there will be another eyesore and may as well shut the whole city of Monroe down, and say we are going to move somewhere else, everything something is brought up and disagreed on.

Mr. Damian Harris, citizen, said the increases are steady falling on the backs of the citizens and do know that most people who frequent the DMV through Monroe transit, are poor people; there is enough going on with the different fees, increases and it makes it that much harder to acquire things that people are trying to do, like the driver's license and keeping an active ID, because if you don't have these things, then you go to jail and if you are stopped and don't have one because you can't afford one, then you go to jail and that's another burden on you, if you can't afford it and \$1,50 increase don't sound like a lot when you are speaking about it, but when you are looking at certain people's pockets, and the different income levels throughout the community, then it affects us more so than anyone else; do believe it would be sufficient to keep it where it is right now and if anything changes in the future, then it should be re-presented and right now we have enough fees, and increases that have to be paid.

RESOLUTIONS AND ORDINANCES FOR SECOND READING AND FINAL ADOPTION AND SUBJECT TO PUBLIC HEARING: NONE.

CITIZENS PARTICIPATION:

1. Mr. Damian Coleman, citizen, spoke regarding his organization and how it can assist with the issues and concerns of the city including stopping the violence among teens, crime, mentorship.
2. Pastor John Thomas, citizen, passed out fliers to Council and spoke regarding his concerns for Monroe and invited everyone to an upcoming event on September 27, 2019, South 6<sup>th</sup> Street.
3. Mr. James Skipper, citizen, spoke regarding issues that exist on the Southside and improving the area. He mentioned the crime consultant that was paid by the city and asked where was the crime consultant and the programs that he talked about implementing.
4. Mr. Tyrone Dickens, K-9, citizen, stated he has missed Council meetings, but will start coming back and talked about his concern for the community and how he has assisted. He asked that everyone come together and work together and not point fingers.
5. Mr. Larry Major, citizen, spoke regarding issues on McGee Street and the water line issues, and citizens not having water for extended periods of time. He spoke about the consequences of not having water, if there was a fire emergency and asked for assistance to this issue. Ms. Angela Campbell, water distribution, came forward and apologized for the inconvenience and said they are working asap to get the lines replaced on McGee Street and will try to do it within the next week or so, will assess it, dig it up and find out where the worst area is and will do that first; she said they are aware that they have been in that area more than once, and will take care of asap. Mr. Major said that it wasn't just McGee Street, but it was in the community with those water line issues

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and not this week, but for the past several months. Ms. Campbell stated, the city has lots of areas that need main lines replaced and are trying to work with the severe areas and then work their way down, but they are trying to take care of it as soon as possible. Ms. Woods thanked Ms. Campbell.

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 7:49 p.m., upon a motion of Mrs. Ezernack and seconded by Mr. Wilson. (There were no public comments)

Ms. Juanita G. Woods  
Council Chairwoman

Ms. Carolus S. Riley  
Council Clerk

Ms. Jacqueline Benjamin  
Council Secretary

**\*For extended details on the Council meeting please call the Council Clerk, Monday-Friday at 329-2252; also, a recording of the minutes can be sent via email to you.**