

City Hall, Monroe, Louisiana

June 13, 2023

6:00p.m.

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

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

There was absent: None

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

The Invocation was led by Pastor Andy Smith, Pastor of The Life City Church of Monroe.

COMMUNICATIONS & SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Mr. Harvey had no announcements.

Mrs. Ezernack thanked everyone for attending the meeting in spite of the inclement weather. She said that she wasn't at the last meeting, but she wanted to publicly recognize and give her condolences to the family of Mrs. Gloria Walker. She said Mrs. Walker was always in attendance at the Council meetings until her health declined a few years ago. She said that she always gave her opinion, complimented when it was due, and gave her criticism when it was necessary. She was one of the regular attendees and she will be sorely missed by her family and by our audience as well.

Ms. Woods thanked everyone for attending the meeting in spite of this inclement weather. She would also like to echo what Mrs. Ezernack said about Mrs. Gloria Walker. She expresses her condolences for her and all the pillars in our community that have passed away. She said that Mrs. Walker was a community leader and activist; she was funeralized on June 3rd and she was soliciting prayer for her family. Ms. Woods said if you haven't had an opportunity to look at Facebook, because it was a beautiful service. She expressed her condolences to a pioneer for women in politics, a community activist, founding member of the Owl Street Civic and Social Club, she was a true Bookertorian. Another pillar of the community was Lady Red, is what she went by, she continued by saying that if she was for you, she was for you and if she was against you, she was against you. She said that you never had to wonder because she would always let you know. She said the woman she is talking about is the mother of a Monroe City employee, Terry Pugh, and the grandmother of Mrs. Jasmyne Pugh-McConnell. She said that Mrs. Clydell Pugh Jones will be funeralized on Saturday, June 17th at 11:00 o'clock at the St. Timothy Baptist Church. She asked that we keep this family lifted up in prayer. Ms. Woods wanted to share with everyone about this month, being Juneteenth Month and celebrating the entire month and she would like to thank the City Council, the Mayor, and the administration of this city for embracing this celebration. She said that we are now doing our second annual Juneteenth Celebration, that has continued to go well without incident, and we expect the same for this year's event. She wanted to publicly invite everyone to visit our website at www.juneteenthmonthmonroenela.com. She said that there is an interactive calendar, where you can add events that you may want others to be aware of. She said that they are starting it off with the Biedenharn Museum followed by the City of Monroe Press Conference, they've had three parades, Black Family Expo at the River Market, where they were introducing bridging the wealth gap. She said that they are asking that we would buy black on Fridays. She said that there are some exciting activities coming up this week and you didn't want to miss them. She said on Friday the Town of Richwood is having a Juneteenth Parade, line up is at 5:00 o'clock, parade starts at 6:00 o'clock, they have historical artifacts and an art exhibit from 11am-3pm. She said the African American Museum is doing a reception, an awards ceremony, "He Matters" in reference to Father's Day, they are asking that you come out and support this. She said on Saturday, Big Day, A Healing Walk-A-Thon in Memory of Mrs. Nancy Johnson, who was the founder of the African American Museum followed by a Juneteenth Family & Fun Day, and the Emoja Juneteenth Freedom Parade where lineup is at 8:00am at Wossman High School, then the

parade will start at 9:00am and it will end at the Charles Johnson Park. She also mentions that at 5:00pm, there is the fourth annual Juneteenth Celebration at the River Market, and lastly on June 30th with a Juneteenth Motown Concert featuring Tim Mitchell & Carol Black. She said she is asking that everyone would come and support these events. She said that they also have a volunteer day at the community garden on Sherrouse on Wednesday.

Mr. Marshall welcomes everyone to the meeting. He expresses his condolences to Mrs. Gloria Walker, for the short time he knew her, he got to know her well and she made sure he knew who she was with everything she had done in the community. He said he also went to school with one of her sons, they shared some things Saturday at the funeral that he wasn't aware concerning her raising her children as well as all of her sister's children and all the other exciting things they shared about Mrs. Gloria. He asked that everyone continue to keep their family in their prayers. Mr. Marshall said that on Thursday, June 15th at 6:00pm, they will have Mr. Louis Russell from Louisiana Housing Corporation to come in, show us about historic tax credits, rental restoration programs, and other incentives that they have at Louisiana Housing Corporation. He said that they will be giving a lot of insight and access on how to apply for things and how it will benefit you from their programs. He said if you are not busy on Thursday night come to 1800 Jackson Street starting at 6:00 o'clock, they will also have a zoom link posted as well. He said this event is also being sponsored by the Mu Tau Chapter of Omega Psi Phi who are also here tonight for the second year to present a check to the City for all the kids that participate in the Summer Camp in the local recreation centers. He asked that the brothers of the Mu Tau Chapter come forth to present the check to the City of Monroe. He told everyone to have a blessed Juneteenth weekend.

Mayor Ellis welcomed and thanked everyone for attending the meeting despite the inclement weather. He said there were a lot of exciting things that happened especially with the announcement that Amtrak had joined our Mayor's application between Mayor Flags in Vicksburg going all the way down to Mayor Arceneaux in Shreveport. He said they left a lasting impression upon all the Amtrak executives; they really made a huge impact in the fact that the community turned out and with so much excitement in the air and that helped our application. It helped end the year to those who were working so hard to get to this route and station. The Mayor said the Parks & Recreation Master Plan presentations went well, thank you to the public that has put so much into this because this is your plan. He said this is direct impact and input from you the public of what you would like to see for the rec center programs, parks program, and the infrastructure that is needed to support your vision. He said that you can go see this at www.monroe.city and it talks about the strategic planning process, and it will take you down through it and show you the vision. He said it will give you the box top to the puzzle and what we are working towards, this all comes from you, and you see we didn't wait on the plan. He said there are a lot of things that are turning dirt right now within the city, within our parks and recreation for improvements, so be on the lookout for the next couple of weeks to continue the progress. The Mayor mentioned the Mayor's Cup, he's urging everyone to check out the City's Facebook page, shining a spotlight on all the scholars here locally who were recipients of the Mayor's Cup Scholarships and asked for words of encouragement as they go towards their next station in life and to let them know that we are rooting them on as they follow their collegiate or workforce next step. The Mayor noted they also had the opportunity to celebrate Public Works Week. He said when you see our folks that are working in Public Works to let them know how much they are appreciated because our City can't work without them. He said to show them that they are loved, cared for, and appreciated.

Mrs. Dawson asks Ms. Ellen Hill to come up to make her announcement.

Ms. Ellen Hill, Planning and Urban Development, announced the launching of their yearly discussion with the community for their annual CDBG (Community Development Block Grant), funding and home funding. She said on Wednesday at the Public Safety Center all the non-profits are encouraged to come to the public safety center from 3-5pm, and they will walk people through the application process and requirements. She said on Thursday evening again at the Public Safety Center from 5:30-7:00pm they will be discussing their annual plans and seed community input and recommendations; she really wants to encourage the community to come out and join them.

Mrs. Dawson welcomes everyone to the meeting tonight and expresses her condolences to the families who have lost loved ones since our last council meeting. She said that she wasn't in attendance at the last meeting because her son graduated from the sixth grade, so she had to miss

the last Council meeting. She apologizes for her absence. She said that she wanted to reiterate a couple of things before we get the meeting started with our agenda. She said that she wants to make sure that everyone is aware of our procedures and rules because she notices a lot of people here and she's not sure if a lot of people are there to speak on a specific thing, but she wants to make sure that this will be an orderly process during this meeting tonight. She said if you are here to comment on an agenda item make sure you come to the podium, you will be allowed three minutes to speak the timer will be on and once you hear the buzzer go off, please make sure you conclude your comments because the Marshal standing there will be escorting you to your seat and if you continue he may escort you further. She also wants to remind everyone that public comment period is your opportunity to share your views, this is not a question-and-answer period, you can ask your political official questions, but this is not a question-and-answer period for you to question the department heads regarding what you want to know. She said that you can ask your questions to your Council members while you're here, make sure you direct your questions to them instead of the administration, but if Council have any questions for administration, they will call up the administration at that time. She reminded everyone to please silence your cell phones and if you have any comments, they must be related to the item that we are on topic for. She said to please keep your comments on topic, civil, and be respectful.

Upon a motion of Mr. Harvey and seconded by Ms. Woods, the minutes of the Legal and Regular session of May 23, 2023, were approved. (Mrs. Ezernack and Mrs. Dawson abstained) (There were no comments from the public).

PROPOSED CONDEMNATIONS:

Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack and seconded by Mr. Harvey to remove all condemnations items 1-4 from the agenda, were approved unanimously. (There were no public comments).

- (1.) 3403 Dick Taylor Street (D4) (Owner – Killkunya K Galbert)
- (2.) 2905 Turner Street (D3) (Owner-Jorge Alberto Montes Mija)
- (3.) 3802 Pippin Street (D3) (Owners- 1st Lady Properties, LLC; Lois E. Cooper)
- (4.) 1409 Griffin Street (D3) (Owners William Dunnaway & Caslean Lankford)

ACCEPTANCE OR REJECTION OF BIDS:

(a) Upon motion of Ms. Woods seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8525 to accept the bids Kepper Trucking & Dirt Contracting, LLC, in the amount of \$296,400.00 for the Chennault Golf Cart Paths Improvements Project, and further authorizing an authorized city representative, to enter into and execute a contract for said work. (There was no public comment.)

RESOLUTIONS AND MINUTE ENTRIES:

Council:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Marshall seconded by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8526 to the Open Container Ordinance to LaQuenia Wheeler (1991 Class Reunion) pursuant to Monroe City Code Sec. 12-231 D. (Open Container Ordinance), and further providing with respect thereto. (There was no public comment.)

(b) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey seconded by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved a Resolution No.8527 exception to the Open Container Ordinance to the Twin City Art Foundation (Reception: A. Hays Town Exhibition) pursuant to Monroe City Code Sec. 12-231 D. (Open Container Ordinance), and further providing with respect thereto. (There was no public comment.)

(c) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey seconded by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved a Resolution No.8528 exception to the Open Container Ordinance to the City of Monroe (Downtown Independence Day Celebration) pursuant to Monroe City Code Sec. 12-231 D. (Open Container Ordinance), and further providing with respect thereto. (There was no public comment.)

(d) Upon motion of Mr. Marshall seconded by Mr. Harvey and approved Resolution No.8529 establishing Purchasing and Bidding Procedures for the City of Monroe and further providing with respect thereto. (Mr. Marshall & Ms. Woods voted no.)

Mrs. Dawson said that before we get into the public comment portion, she wants to remind everyone that your comments should be directed towards the City Council and remain on topic. She said that she is going to ask Mr. Curt Kelly, Director of Purchasing, to come before public comments. She said to Mr. Kelly that we have had this item on the agenda before and there may still be some of the same questions over the past couple of weeks or from our last community meeting. She asked him to please explain purchasing policy and why these changes are on this agenda.

Mr. Curt Kelly, Director of Purchasing, stated what we have before us and what we are asking you all to do is simply vote on us mirroring what the State limits are for purchasing materials and supplies for Public Works projects pertaining to construction, we are attempting to move that threshold to \$250,000.00. He said what the State does as well as our local entities around Monroe, Ouachita Parish Police Juror, Monroe City School System, Ouachita Parish School Board. He said that they are asking the Council to adopt this policy by trusting them to do the right things and making sure that they are following all policies and procedures. He said that they are also changing some of their internal policies on how they do things. He said when you are seeing a public works project you are looking at, according to what the State Law says a project that's \$250,000.00 or above goes out for a seal public bid. He said what they are asking Council to do is moving our threshold from \$30,000.00 to \$250,000.00 where you would still get three quotes, not a seal bid, but you would still pick the lowest quote. He said whereas the departments, when they had a project that was under the threshold, State Law tells you anything \$5,000.00 and above has to be reduce to a formal contract. He said what used to happen is when the departments get from \$5,000.00 to \$29,999.00, they would get the three quotes themselves. He said what they are introducing now in the purchasing division so that we can be sure that we heard their cry as Council, that your constituents gave to you to ensure fairness across the board. He said that they are making sure that those things will be done in the purchasing division going forward. He said when he is referring to the purchasing division, he is saying they specifically will go out and get those three quotes and they will ensure that anything that is over \$100,000.00 there will be a DBE goal assess to it. He said that they want to make sure that the DBE is qualified to do the work in that area, they are always welcome to bid on any project like they do now. He said nothing changes, the policies and procedures are going to be exactly the same, we are going to always be accountable to the Council, there's always oversight because our policies and procedures will get audited on our policies and procedures, internally as well as externally. He said that Council always has an internal audit that works directly for you who can always give you the oversight on what we have and what we don't have to ensure that we are doing the right things. He said that they have an external auditor that comes in and audits us every year and we are rated against our own policies and procedures, that is what the audit does. He said that there is always accountability, always things that are there to be put forth and we will ensure that we will do the right thing and always come to the Council whenever you have questions like you have done in the past. He said that he has received calls from all the Council members in the past. He said that he will always answer your calls and do whatever the Council needs them to do, nothing changes. He said that he just asks that the Council trust Purchasing to do their job, just like your constituents trust you once when you were first elected to office, and he is asking them to trust them to do their job.

Mr. Brandon Creekbaum, Assist City Attorney, wanted to add to that, he wanted to highlight a couple of other things as Mrs. Dawson mentioned that this was an item that was previously presented to Council back in 2021. He said that bringing this item back there have been some things that had been changed in this proposal to come in alignment and updates to the State Law and the interim since 2021 since this was presented, the State also changed the limit for materials and supplies so that figure was altered in order to mirror what the State Law does. He said another thing that Mr. Kelly mentioned that is apart of this resolution was the DBE goal addition, which was one of the comments from last time and we will ensure that Disadvantage Businesses are still getting shares of the work and so we did include in this resolution a mandate for projects exceeding \$100,000.00 dollars, that DBE goal will still be accessed so we can have that still be apart of the process to make sure that those DBE's are still getting those percentages of the work in accordance

with the existing policy. He said another one of the comments that was made saying Council will be removed from the process and not have any idea of what is going on with these projects and what money is being moved or spent, they have also included a reporting obligation in this version of the resolution that would give them specific information about on going projects, what districts they are occurring in, the amount of the projects, the goals that were accessed to, and the contractors that it was awarded to. He said that the Council has a constant update about what is going on with these projects that are going on in their communities. He said that those were direct responses to some of the comments that were raised the last time this item was on the agenda. Mr. Creekbaum wanted to reiterate what Mr. Kelly said, this is largely to align us with the best practices with the Louisiana Legislature Auditor and how they do things with their public works contracts, materials, and supplies that's why this negotiation and the RFP process and some of the alternatives requirements are included in the resolution, to ensure that the best practices as set forth by the Legislature Auditor and the Attorney General are adhere to if the Council does choose to adopt this resolution. The City will be following the best practices in accordance with those set forth in here, and as Mr. Kelly mentioned it would bring us in alignment with the other jurisdictions that are already using the fallback State Bid Law. He said a lot of people are not aware of the tracking trajectory of State Bid Law, it was before 1997 that Bid Law was at \$50,000.00 dollars statewide and in 2005 it went to \$100,000.00 dollars and then it increased to \$150,000.00 dollars in 2009, and then it increased to \$250,000.00 dollars in 2020. He said over the past almost twenty years or a little longer than twenty years, State Law started higher than where we were and incrementally it has gotten consistently higher over the years recognizing that the past twenty years the cost of materials, supplies, and public works projects has just consistently increased. While the City of Monroe's purchasing policy has stayed the same, and by tying it to State Bid Law will again bring the City in alignment with the practices in alignment with what other jurisdictions are doing, what the State is doing, and it will allow us to align ourselves with the best practices.

Mrs. Sonya Jacobs, 700 University Avenue, politely asked Madame Chair for her grace on her three minute time limit as we have heard the administration speak to and articulate their points clearly. She said that when we talk about inclusion, that's what this is about, we know very well that the people are saying that they simply want to be included. She said and I quote, "The Bible says that if you are found faithful over the few things, He'll make you ruler over many." Matthew 25:21. She asks the question, have we been faithful over this few??? She said that she heard what Mr. Kelly said, and she and him have had constant exchange. She said that the people have asked to be included. She asked the Council what percentage of the population is being included right now??? She said at the \$30,000.00 dollars threshold, how much of the population, how much of your constituents are being included, the minority business inclusion, what is that three percent??? She said let's say four percent. She said that maybe Mr. Kelly could answer the question.

Mrs. Dawson asked Mrs. Jacobs included in what???

Mrs. Jacobs answered the overall contracting opportunities, because every second and fourth Tuesday of this month, is a pay day for someone, someone's, some people, far too many, but not many of them look like those who you represent. She said that is an irrefutable fact.

Mrs. Dawson said that it depends on how many DBE's are bidding, there's always most time a DBE goal that has to be met with these city contracts.

Mrs. Jacobs responded to Mrs. Dawson's comment saying not so, she said she has been in this far too long, the goals have not been met, that was an area of contention for the previous administration. She said to Mayor Ellis that was part of his platform when he decided to run to include. She said now there is ARPA money, CARES Act money, Infrastructure money, we have money that we have never seen before, money coming in and the people are still hungry, starving, begging, asking to be, they want to be included. She said if we can't say to the people, we know that 10%, 12%, 4%, 3%, we don't know how many of you all are being included now, then what's to say when they give carte blanche, that there is going to be greater inclusion. She said that the people simply want to be included. She said with the Purchasing Policy being where it is, do we agree, absolutely we agree that it needs to be changed, but what we disagree is that we are not ready to move the needle and say we are going to include the people at a quarter of a million when we're not including them at \$30,000.00.

Mr. Kelly said to clarify what we are looking at and what Mrs. Jacobs stated with the statement, Tuesdays and Fridays are paydays. The city has an internal DBE goal of 12%, the City exceeds that DBE goal at 12% on Public works projects, this is what we are talking about public works projects. He said when a project goes out for bid, you have a prior contract, or a DBE can be the prior contractor, you have a contractor that is your prime. He said your prime in return hire their subs and we ensure that the prime is getting their sub whether they are going to be a local contractor or whether it will be someone that's throughout the state of Louisiana, but the prime is responsible for getting their sub, which are DBE's. He said that their prime pay their DBE, so technically they would never come to the City of Monroe to get their check. He said when you look at the projects that are under \$30,000.00 dollars, yes we have plenty of DBE's that have gotten those contracts that don't go out for bid. He asked could there be more, there can always be more.

Mrs. Jacobs interjects saying, what percentage???

Mrs. Dawson said that Mrs. Jacobs' time was up, thank you.

Mr. Kelly said once again there are always DBE's, there are always minority contractors that do business with the city of Monroe, always!!! He said at any point they can bid on any project what they bid on is a public bid. He said when you go under that \$30,000.00 threshold, the departments in the past have gotten quotes. He said they haven't always gotten a DBE to get a quote, that is why this process will change, they are going to ensure that there's a DBE. He said that every project we receive a quote from, there's at least one DBE. He said they are trying to make sure we are moving the needle to include inclusion, what Mrs. Jacobs has always said, we meet often, we have met often in the past that is her number one thing, INCLUSION!!! He said they are making sure they are going to include DBE's, that's what they are trying to do. He said they are changing internal policies so they are trying their best. Mr. Kelly noted can they always do better, do they fall short, they fall short in personal lives so they will fall short in this as well, and they are trying their best to make it better and they will make it better.

Mrs. Dawson thanks Mr. Kelly.

Mr. Eugene Payne, 1705 Reed Street, said that the language of this proposal is confusing to him, and he can imagine that it is confusing to the public. He said that under his understanding, \$30,000.00 dollars has been increased to \$250,000.00 dollars and he wants the Council to explain what does that mean for the taxpayers money. He said that he pays taxes in three of the five districts, and he would like to know what will the public be benefiting, raising the ceiling from the \$30,000.00 to \$250,000.00 without a question on how these funds being used.

Mrs. Dawson responded by saying Mr. Kelly just explained all of that in his statement and asked Mr. Payne if there was another particular question.

Mr. Payne said the public may not understand what's going on. He said for example, public works gets funds from the federal government, he said that he confronted the Council months ago about a project that I still haven't gotten the answers from the treasury department. He said it was about an E-Bus, he said he didn't know anything about what the E-Buses are to do, that's a million dollar project. He asked what the public gets from this, and where the monies are going. He said we are entitled to know how and where these monies are being spent.

Mrs. Dawson thanked Mr. Payne.

Mr. Harvey said normal reporting still exists; all of that exists today.

Mr. Kelly said nothing had changed.

Mrs. Ezernack said when a project is brought forth and when it comes to us to approve a project, all of those facts are included in that particular thing when it actually does get to us when we receive an actual bid or project. She said how the funds are going to be spent, what's involved with the project, what the contract may be that is all included at that particular point, nothing in that regard will change, its still accountability whether it's a \$3,000.00 dollar project or a \$2.5 million dollar project. The accountability of how those funds spent is always discussed and a part of that project.

Mrs. Dawson said they have a financial meeting every month, money that's coming in or money being spent, City Council sits in the meetings, and they are aware of what's going on. She said that hasn't changed.

Ms. Kenya Roberson, Executive Director of the Monroe Regional Black Chamber of Commerce, said she hasn't missed a City Council meeting in 18 months. She said if the Council is truly concerned about the concerns of the business owners and residents of the City of Monroe, reach out to them to have meetings so they can gain understanding, so the Council can understand where the ball is being dropped. She is not hard to find, she has made herself available, she's reached out to her Council people, two of them have avail themselves. She said she's given options, suggestions over and over again. She had met Mr. Kelly and if you want to take it up, why such a drastic increase. She said from thirty thousand to two hundred and fifty thousand, when they have concerns now at thirty thousand. Ms. Roberson said her phone is ringing off the hook constantly, asking her as the executive director of the Monroe Regional Black Chamber of Commerce, so she can get her name in the hat. She asked why can't the City have some training, why can't they be more transparent, she gets nothing. Instead, she has to come to the Council meetings and it's like she's ranting or unhappy or gripping, she said it's called wanting fair, for the people that she represents. She said that they trust her to advocate on their behalf and that is what she is doing. She is not getting that in return for the people that have elected the Council and it hurts her, she has to get on the phone and say she did all she could do, it's out of her hands, it's in her Councilman's hands. She understands there are projects that have to be completed and, she understands the time restraints that Mr. Kelly is under.

Mrs. Ezernack said she wanted to comment on something that Ms. Roberson said. When she said, go with the Mayor, she doesn't think this is a go with the Mayor type of activity. The Mayor doesn't have a vote, the Council has the vote. She said their vote is based on experience, the meetings had, and she understands there have been community meetings when this was first added to the agenda, other activities, she knows they have had training and so forth. She believes this is something the Council is going to do to make efficiency in the City and to make projects, especially, these smaller projects move faster. She said its very difficult now to get bids on certain things and trying to move that forward and she believes taking it back to purchasing to get those bids to some of those projects is going to help the efficiencies move these projects forward because it grinds slowly. She said anyone that has been involved in a City project knows that it's going to grind slowly. She said they are trying to move these along and take on more projects so they will finish some of the ones that are in that hopper. She said they have had meetings internally on the new procedures and what's going to be done, the checks and balances they have in place. She said the city has a really good internal auditor and they definitely have a good external auditor and if we mess up and we don't recognize it, they sure will recognize it for us and you will hear about that because it will be sent to the legislature auditor and will be in the report, so there are checks and balances in place. She said it's time to move forward and get these things done.

Mrs. Dawson explained after this was on the agenda the first time, they voted no on the resolution based on the community's response. She said there was standing room only in the meeting, they had a community meeting to discuss the purchasing policy. They had all the department heads there, she's spoken directly to every department heads as to how this is going to benefit our city and not even 80% of the people that came to the Council Meeting, showed up to the community meeting to get the information regarding the Purchasing policy. She said they did have meetings, trainings, small business owner meetings that the City has had, things that Mr. Fortenberry has setup for small business events, so they have tried inclusion and make sure everyone was involved, all DBEs were present and included. She asked Mr. Kelly how many DBE's have bid on projects and have been declined. She asked if he had that number.

Mr. Kelly said they are not being declined, if they are not the lowest bidder, they don't get awarded that project. That is a city policy they have always had in place. You have to be the lowest bidder, so DBE's get those projects. DBE can bid on any project they choose to bid on, that is a public bid. Those projects that are under \$30,000.00, they have to be solicited for a quote, those are two different things. He said public bid projects that have gotten projects or win projects, but the projects under \$30,000.00 dollars haven't always gotten them in years past. He said in the year

and a half that he has been over purchasing it has increased. He said it was decent beforehand, they can better, there's always room for improvement at the top, Always!!!

Mr. Roy Heatherly, Monroe Chamber of Commerce, said there are so many great things happening in this city right now. He said when the Governor was here a few months ago for the groundbreaking for Biomedical, he said what's happening in this city is transformative. He said he sees this policy that the City is trying to change, as putting us on the same level with other municipalities in the state, in our region, and police jury. He said Monroe is getting recognized across this whole region, if the Amtrak presentation last week wasn't recognition of that don't know what is. He said this policy allows our city to be more liberal, to move quicker on projects, and get things done and keeps us moving forward. He said there's a lot of moving projects going on right now, from a business perspective I think it makes total sense for us to do this and he supports the Council very much for doing it.

Ms. Marie Brown, 1002 S. 5th Street, said that she wasn't aware of the time limit on agenda items, she thought it was always on the back end for citizen's participation.

Mrs. Dawson said it has been.

Ms. Brown said her take on this, she said this is a weak council and a strong Mayor. She said that's what this council is. She said if the Council give up their power to control the money, that's a problem. She said the Council is weak because the Mayor makes all the basic decisions, the Council is in charge of the money, the budget, how the money is being spent. She said that the Council needs to be able to have checks and balances. She said that checks and balances have to take place. She said at a meeting the Council were concerned about giving the Mayor a raise and you didn't think that should be. She said this is an election year, and the Council is going to give the power to give \$250,000.00 dollars, that's ridiculous. She said it went from \$30,000.00 to \$250,000.00. She said how do you go from \$30,000.00, the same question you had about the Mayor's raise, how do you go from one price to the next price.

Mrs. Ezernack noted because it hasn't been done in twenty years.

Ms. Brown said she will reclaim her time back please. She said this hasn't been done since 2004. She said she thinks this city is moving fast, the Mayor just said how fast it's moving. She asked the Council why would they give up their power to have one person make a decision as to who gets the bid. She said the Council said they are going to be involved, that's a double standard. She said how is the Council saying they are going to be involved and then Mr. Kelly ends up making the decision, She said its one way or the other, so if you're going to be involved, stay involved. She asked why is the Council trying to pass this, to make these changes makes no sense. She said the process of making purchasing enter into a contract without former advertising and public bidding with the intention of obtaining the best price, how is the City going to obtain the best price if you're not bidding it out. She said that this is contradictive, the process where the contractors submit quotes for materials or equipment including labor and contractors believe that fit the buyer's need, the buyer then chooses the best possible. She wanted to know how many times you have told her Mr. Kelly can use this \$250,000.00 dollar policy; she didn't know. Ms. Brown said this doesn't need to happen right now, just like the Council decided to wait on the Mayor's salary, you need to do the same for this decision as well.

Mr. Harvey said that he wanted to remind everyone that the Council still have to get three quotes just like they have to get bids and we always have the responsibility to select the lowest bid. Even presented to Council, its presented as the lowest bid. He said the Council doesn't get to change to the second highest bid or anything like that so in both scenarios we have to accept the lowest quote or bid.

Mr. Marshall said from the last meeting, the engagement part is what most people are really concerned about. He said we engage the community and a lot of other things, strategic plans, and things like that, but when it comes to things like this that matters most to the people in our communities, we should really put forth that same energy. He said we have to come to a point where we are meeting their expectations just like we are trying to meet these expectations on these other things. He said no one has a problem with the increase, that's not what they are saying, they are saying that it is not enough engagement, not enough information coming forward that they can

be comfortable with the increase. He said there needs to be more engagement, more information, more details as far as moving this project forward and letting them know how they can get access, how they can be a part of and establish a happy medium, but that is what has to happen.

Ms. Woods said that everyone knows where she stands in this situation. She said that there are a lot of things that she is ok with. She said wanting to move the city forward, wanting to expedite things, but do we have to do it at this rate. She said Mrs. Ezernack said that everyone is involved in some meetings, everyone except her of course. She said when she voiced that she was against this, they felt that there was no sense in talking to her about it. She didn't get to be a part of the involvement from Legal to talk about this. She said she was disappointed, she told them they can still talk, and she was told there is no need to talk because you've already expressed, you're against it. She said that she put a post out there, she had expressed what her position was, and they were at \$250,000.00 dollars. She said she wasn't at \$250,000.00 dollars. She asked the administration; do they think they can decrease the amount. The thing that concerns her the most and she knows there are a lot of things that have transpired since they have put this in place, but the things that gets her is the \$30,000.00 and when the previous administration was around, they tried to move it to \$15,000.00 dollars, and now all of a sudden, they are moving it up to \$250,000.00 dollars. She wanted to know the urgency, why does it keep coming back, why can't we choose. She told the Mayor, why not go with a number that's smaller than \$250,000.00 dollars, that would be one that she would probably support and tell her constituents about when they had meetings. She said that she had one meeting at New Antioch and it was a packed house, and they were discussing this matter. She said you have a little bit, and you show yourself faithful over that, then your increases come and then you are faithful over a lot more. They are saying our municipalities surrounding us and where they were with it, and she knows Shreveport is nowhere near \$250,000.00 dollars and they are a lot larger than Monroe.

Mr. Kelly noted that Shreveport is at \$250,000.00 dollars.

Ms. Woods said they must have just moved it. She said when this first came to this council they weren't at \$250,000.00 dollars and neither was Alexandria. She said they are small and its just an oversight. She said that at this time she would like to yield her time to Mrs. Jacobs, because she had some things she was saying.

Mrs. Dawson said we are now at the comments from Council. She said Mrs. Jacobs had her three minutes just like everyone else did.

Ms. Woods said let the record show we changed the rules at the beginning and the chairman can do this and she knows that. She said usually under these type of open comments, its not a three minute limit, so Mrs. Jacobs. She said there have been times because she wants everyone to get along in here, but there have been times when other people have been talking and you allowed the bell to go off and they got to continue. She said that she just feels that Mrs. Jacobs had some other things that she wanted to put out, so for the record, I wanted to yield a portion of my talk time to Mrs. Jacobs so that she can complete her thought.

Mrs. Dawson said that we will not be allowing Mrs. Jacobs to complete her thought because she had her three minutes during public comment. She asked are there anymore comments from Council.

Mrs. Ezernack said concerning this \$250,000.00 dollar threshold it really doesn't matter the size of your community because your projects are going to be the cost of the project. She said if you are talking about a public works project, chances are its going to be \$250,000.00 dollars or more if it's a large project. She said small drainage project something like that maybe not, but most of what we do pertaining to public works are large expensive projects and it will be the same in Alexandria, Shreveport, or Lafayette or wherever, could be more expensive, public works uses the same materials, same type of construction, etc., it's just going to generally expensive. She said \$250,00.00 in today's world in your pocketbook, is not enough. She said when do we decide when we will be catching up with our neighboring communities. She said each Council member had a certain amount of funds they could spend in their districts, and they go to a recreation department and if she wanted to purchase baseballs or equipment for a ball field, they would still have to go out and get three quotes. She said it's a small project, but it takes too long to get the quotes and we run out of time and are no longer able to purchase it until the next year. She said that is a small

example. This would be an opportunity for the purchasing department to find out about more vendors so we can find out how to get them on the list as an approved vendor to be more inclusive.

Ms. Woods wanted to amend the motion to change the cap from \$250,000 to \$150,000.00 dollars.

Mrs. Dawson stated we already have a motion on the floor, and it's been seconded, so we are going to call for a vote.

Mrs. Ezernack votes yes.

Mr. Marshall said that there has been enough dialogue and sure needs an increase, but he thinks there needs to be more dialogue, more inclusion, more details, so at this point he voted no.

Mr. Harvey voted yes, and he thank the administration of purchasing for going through legislature external all these years and continue to show that you followed these principles and showed that you've been good stewards of this money and he fully support what they are doing here.

Ms. Woods voted no.

Mrs. Dawson said before she gives her vote she wants to let everyone know that during her time on this council she has definitely being accused of neglecting her district, because she doesn't play politics and she doesn't vote according to what certain people want but to what's beneficial for the City and her district as a whole. She said for the record she ran for this city council because she wants to make a difference in her community and in the city, which she knows she has. The city has so much positive growth right now and wants to keep this momentum going, she said they have a lot of stuff that they are trying to do, since this time, from the last meeting she hasn't heard from any DBE's saying they have been neglected. She hasn't heard any negative comments from anyone in her district, actually she has gotten a few phone calls saying they are ready for the movement to continue. They like what they are seeing, they don't have a problem with the movement that is going on because it should have been going on previously so with that being said she is voting yes.

Department of Administration:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey seconded by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved Resolution No. Consider an Application by Daisha Gutierrez-Segovia dba Abuela's Tex, LLC, 1304 Lamy Lane, Monroe LA 71201 for a New 2023 Class A Alcoholic Beverage Permit. The Monroe Police Department has no disqualifying records and Sales Tax has been approved. (Distance Report Cleared, Cert. of Occupy Cleared) (There were no public comment.)

Ms. Woods asked were the individuals who were opening this restaurant present. She said since they are not, she wanted to tell them thank you.

Mrs. Ezernack said that this is in her district, and she wanted to say thank you as well to the business for investing in our community, especially in District 2, and she passed by there today and she said that it is looking very nice.

(b) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved Resolution No. Consider an Application by Chuck Fontenot dba Fontenot Cajun Way-Monroe, 436 DeSiard Street, Monroe LA 71201 for a New 2023 Class A Alcoholic Beverage Permit. The Monroe Police Department has no disqualifying records and Sales Tax has been approved. (Distance Report Cleared, Cert. of Occupy Cleared) (There were no public comments.)

(c) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved Resolution No. Consider an Application by Sanjib Basnet dba Naina Inc., dba-Raceway 6863, 104 S. College Street, Monroe LA 71203 for a New 2023 Class B Alcoholic Beverage Permit. The Monroe Police Department has no disqualifying records and Sales Tax has been approved. (Distance Report Cleared, Cert. of Occupy Cleared). (There were no public comments.)

Ms. Woods asked if the people that are opening up this Raceway in her district were present. She wanted to say, for the record, thank you for coming back and opening up a much needed facility.

Mrs. Ezernack said that they have been doing a lot of work there and it looks very nice, she thanks them for investing in our community.

Department of Planning & Urban Development:

(a) Upon motion of Ms. Woods seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved Consider request from True Releaf for a Major Conditional Use Permit authorizing the use of the location at (609 North 4th Street) to operate a Bar and have on-premises alcohol beverage sales in the B-2, (Neighborhood Business) District. The Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance allows this as a Major Conditional Use in the B-2, (Neighborhood Business) 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. (There were no comments.)

(b) Upon motion of Ms. Woods seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Consider request from The Renewal Center of Northeast Louisiana for a Major Conditional Use Permit authorizing the use of the location at (724 Adams Street) to construct and operate a Homeless Day Shelter in the B-3, (General Business/Commercial) District. The Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance allows this 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. (There were no public comments.)

Mayor Ellis said that the folks from the Renewal Center are here tonight, and he wanted to say thank you for what they do and the services that they provide for our citizens, that need that love, prayer, and care that they provide. He said if anyone would like to volunteer, this would be a great group to get plugged in with. He said just to go and visit with people that are being cared for there really opens your heart and thanked them again for loving those most vulnerable in our community.

(c) Upon motion of Ms. Woods seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved Consider request from Consuming Fire Ministries for a Major Conditional Use Permit authorizing the use of the location at (1707 Hudson Lane) to allow a House of Worship (small) in the B-3, (General Business/Commercial) District. The Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance allows House of Worship (church) 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. (There were no public comments.)

(d) Upon motion of Ms. Woods seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Consider request from Makalu Enterprises, Inc., for a Major Conditional Use Permit authorizing the use of the location at (1314 Sterlington Road) to allow alcohol beverage sales, off-premises in the B-3, (General Business/Commercial) District. The Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance allows this as a Major Conditional Use in the B-2, (Neighborhood Business) 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. (There were no public comments.)

Mayor's Office:

(a) Upon motion of Ms. Woods seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8530 authorizing a designated city representative to enter into a Professional Services Agreement by and between the City of Monroe and Stricklyus Films and further providing with respect thereto.

Ms. Kelsea McCray, Chief Economic & Cultural Development Officer, said that Stricklyus Films is here in the audience tonight if he would like to come say just a few words.

Mr. Jeron Stricklyn, Stricklyus Films, 1815 University Avenue, said that he is a small business here in Monroe, they have been in business for five years. He said they are planning on working

with the City to provide videography services and photography services to the City, to help spread the message from the Mayor's office and The Council's office.

Mrs. Dawson said she appreciates all the work he has already done for the City. He's doing a great job, looking forward to working with him in the future.

Mayor Ellis said he was Talented, Talented, Talented. He said we always brag upon the wealth of talented people within our region, and this is one of them tonight, homegrown and provides wonderful service. The Mayor said he was the only person that could get his good side and he thanked him.

All the Council thanked Mr. Stricklyn.

Ms. Woods congratulated him on being a new father.

Mr. Stricklyn said thank you.

Mrs. Ezernack thanked him for being in District 2.

(b) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8531 a Resolution authorizing a city representative to enter into a Professional Services Agreement with WHLC Architecture for Architectural Concepts and Designs for the Jack Howard Theater and Monroe Civic Center and further providing with respect thereto.

Mr. Rex Cavinus, Architecture in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, said they have been pursuing this project and hope to be awarded the contract to work with the Mayor and the Council to upgrade that fine facility to make it more up to date for all that use it. Mr. Cavinus will be glad to answer any questions.

Mr. Marshall said, looking forward to it.

Mrs. Ezernack said long overdue.

Mr. Harvey thanked Mr. Cavinus.

Police Department:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8532 authorizing Mayor Friday Ellis to enter into an American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Direct Beneficiary Agreement between the City of Monroe and the Ouachita Parish Police Jury for the Monroe Police Department and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Engineering Services:

(a) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved a Resolution No.8533 authorizing a designated city representative to enter into an Agreement for Professional Services with Gresham Smith related to the design of the Calypso Replacement Pump Station and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Mrs. Ezernack thanked everyone involved with getting this on our agenda for this planning stage, this is long overdue, something they have been trying to get done for many many years in Downtown Monroe and beyond, so thank you so much.

Mayor Ellis said the issue is Calypso is built on the opposite side of the levee and it also helps and challenges the accreditation of the upper Ouachita. He said because of Congresswoman Letlow, they now have the ability to build it on the correct side of the levee, so it doesn't fall in. Over the years it earned the title Collapso because it literally fell into the river and the city has been spending so much money to reinforce that structure. He said this is a great project and it serves one of our biggest healthcare providers and a lot of senior population downtown as well, so he thanked Congresswoman Letlow and State Legislation for securing those funds.

(b) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8534 authorizing a designated city representative, to execute Change Order No. Five (5) for the Kansas Lane Ext (Old Sterlington-US 165) Phase 1, between the City of Monroe

and the Department of Transportation and Development, and D&J Construction Company, LLC to add additional general excavation quantity to the contract for debris removal and an additional 10 working days to the contract and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Mrs. Ezernack said this is another long term project and it's really taking shape. She said if you haven't driven by 165 you can actually see something happening. She said it looks like reality in the making and thanked everyone who was a part of this.

(c) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved to consider a request from the Engineering Department for Council approval for an authorized City representative to advertise for bids for the Louisiana Purchase Exhibit Phase 1 – The Swamp Project. The engineer's estimate is \$2,425,385.00. The DBE Goal is 3.25% and the source of funds are the Capital Infrastructure, CDBG, and Ouachita Parish Police Jury. (There were no public comments.)

Ms. Woods said she knows that this is being funded by three sources, the City's Capital Infrastructure, CVB (Convention Visitors Bureau), and Ouachita Parish Police Juror. She asked what the breakdown of this would be with money.

Mrs. Dawson reiterated that it's the City's Capital Infrastructure, CVB, and the Ouachita Parish Police Jury, that was a typo on item C.

Mr. Morgan McCalister, Department of Engineering, said that is correct, its Ouachita Parish Police Jury at \$300,000.00, CVB at \$403,000.00, and the rest from the City of Monroe.

Ms. Woods thanked Mr. McCalister.

(d) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved a Resolution No. 8535 designated city representative to execute Supplemental Agreement No. Seven (7) to the Professional Services Agreement between the City of Monroe and Arcadis U.A., Inc. related to sanitary sewer inflow & infiltration issues and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS & ORDINANCES:

(a) Upon motion Mrs. Ezernack seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved to remove item (a) to Introduce an Ordinance authorizing a designated city representative to execute an Amended and Restated Lease Agreement between the City of Monroe and Ouachita Grand Plaza, Inc. and further providing with respect thereto. (Legal) (There were no public comments.)

Ms. Woods wanted to know why they were removing this.

Mr. Brandon Creekbaum, Assistant City's Attorney, said that it was on the agenda for the last meeting, but they are still negotiating with the attorneys of the Housing Authority to make sure it's a substantial rewrite and supplement to the original lease, he said he believes the lease was four or five pages, now it is fourteen or fifteen pages, they have been going back and forth and keep thinking they are about ready to put it on, instead they will hold it for now until they iron out all the last details.

(b) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey seconded by Mr. Marshall and approved to Introduce an Ordinance authorizing the City of Monroe to acquire a certain parcel of real property from the Ouachita Parish Police Jury, said property situated in Ouachita Parish, Monroe, La., being lot 1 of the resubdivision of Lots 1, 2 & 7 of the subdivision of Tract 3 of the Conner Realty Corp., and further providing with respect thereto. (Legal) (There were no public comments.) (Ms. Woods voted no.)

Ms. Woods has a few questions; she saw there was a cost that the City was going to incur for acquiring this property. She also asked what the City was going to do with the property once its acquired.

Mr. Marc Keenan, Director of Monroe Transit, said this property is looking to move to the downtown terminal that is currently on Catalpa Street, moving it to the location of the property being acquired near the health unit. He said they are asking the Council to approve the purchase for \$185,000.00 dollars.

Ms. Woods asked if we were going to move the bus terminal that's currently on Catalpa Street, from Downtown and place it next to the Health Unit in that open field.

Mayor Ellis thanked Mr. Keenan for his work with that. He said he knew this was a big project of his and he set the vision for this and to give a first-class operational base. He said that the benefits to his foresight, it helps bring our community to critical services like the health unit, voter's registrar, and he thinks it's a great opportunity for the City and the citizens to amplify what you already do with the transit system in getting close to public services. He also wanted to thank our State delegation for securing the money for this project and for federal grants that have been able to construct this, he thanked Mr. Keenan.

Mr. Keenan said that this is a \$5.5 million dollar project, 80% of it is from federal grants. He said that we have roughly 75% percent in hand now from the federal government.

Mayor Ellis said there are some Capital Outlay funds coming as well as the Governor signing the budget. This current budget will stay when we get some money coming.

Mrs. Ezernack said it will, obviously, be a much more modern facility and much more accessible and convenient as far as the amenities for the passengers.

Mr. Keenan said the majority of the waiting area will be inside a two-story facility. He said that the plot of land is twice the size of where it is now, so they can really do some things there.

Mr. Marshall asked would Greyhound still be included in project.

Mr. Keenan explained at this point and time, Greyhound will not be picking up and letting off passengers at their facility on Catalpa, unless the administration changes their mind, he doesn't believe it will be a part of that either.

RESOLUTIONS AND ORDINANCES FOR SECOND READING AND FINAL ADOPTION

AND SUBJECT TO PUBLIC HEARING:

The Chairman opened the Public Hearing.

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey seconded by Mr. Marshall and unanimously approved to adopt Ordinance No. 12,174 declaring certain immovable property no longer necessary for public use, authorizing a Lease Agreement between the City of Monroe and Biomedical Research and Innovation Park, and further providing with respect thereto. (Legal)

Mr. Roy Heatherly, Board Member of the Biomedical Research Innovation Park, said the leadership of the board VC, Joe Holyfield, and Sue are all out of town and they asked him to come and thank the Mayor and City Council for supporting the Biomedical Research Innovation Park and all that they are doing to help make that a reality. He said just as the Governor said it is transformative, and it is a game changer for our community, so thank you all very much.

CITIZENS PARTICIPATION:

(1.) Darian Belton, 3512 Bon Aire Drive, invited the public out to the Esther Gallo Community Garden Volunteer Day, Wednesday, June 14, 2023, at 5:30pm, there will be free food, fun, activities for kids, free seeds, and resources, information to help you get started on you at home garden. He wants to get the public started on growing their own quality produce. The way he sees it is, if they train enough people to grow and supply their own quality foods, they will improve their health, they will save money on groceries, and if we all grow something we can all trade with each other we can all eat for free. He said so Let's get Growing Monroe, Esther Gallo Community Garden Volunteer Day Wednesday, June 14, 2023, at 5:30pm, come out and let's get growing. Its located at 1401 Sherrouse Street, the Esther Gallo Community Garden, free food, fun activities for kids, if you love to read, we have free books and a library.

(2.) Marie Brown, 1002 S. 5th Street, reminded everyone about the Juneteenth Celebration coming up this weekend. They will be lining up at Wossman High School and going down Burg Jones Lane for the parade. After that there will be a family picnic and she want everyone to come out hungry, don't eat any breakfast, and bring the kids. They will have water slides for the kids to have a great time. They are having a museum out of Baton Rouge, bringing everything that have been created by African Americans, so when you go home you will see these things and think of black folks, come out and see every product that you use a black man or woman created it. She wanted to thank Mrs. Dawson for giving us nine tables to set this museum up at the Pavilion. She wanted to thank Ms. Woods for all the things she's done to make this day happen, Mr. Carday crew to come out to the Juneteenth Celebration and Carroll High School Marching Band will be there, the greatest band in the land. They are going to have a Family Fun Day. Ms. Brown and Ms. Woods are going to go on a speaking tour starting tomorrow about this great event. This is their 12th Annual Juneteenth, and she is also looking forward to next year, she hopes the City embraces Juneteenth and makes it a part of the City's calendar to the point that they have the City seal on Juneteenth. She said no matter what town you go to; the City has the City seal on the Juneteenth, they sponsor it, it is connected to their Parks & Recreation Department. She said to call Bastrop if you want to know how to do it. She wants the City to really put some skin in the game, it's going to be a wonderful event and the City needs to put some skin in the game to be part of it. She is inviting all the Council out, District 1,2,3,4, &5, they want to see them there. She wants the whole City to come and participate. Ms. Brown said she is going to stand here until the bell buzzes because she wants all her three minutes.

Mrs. Dawson asked will they be selling the black owned items out there.

Ms. Brown said they will not be selling, it's just to view. She said sometimes they bring honey with them, they have a honey beehive, and she's asked them to bring that. She said if you want honey straight from the beehive, come out to the event, show your face and be in the place.

(3.) Kenya Roberson, Executive Director of the Monroe Regional Black Chamber, echo's a lot of what Mr. Brown said. She stood before the Council a week before Juneteenth, and she asked that the Council come out and show their faces and celebrate with them they got two council members. She said the Mayor has never graced them with his presence for an event for the Monroe Black Chamber of Commerce in 18 months. She said she has publicly sent invitations, provided invitations, if we are OneRoe, she shouldn't have to beg, they shouldn't have to continue to ask just to see their face, just show the Mayor supports. She asked the other council members to come, they don't show up, she asked how we are OneRoe. She said the whole month is Juneteenth, she knows you have a lot going on she does too, but she knows that people depend upon her, and she values that. She said if she knows that her members have something, she breaks her back to be their time and all, they deserve the same.

(4.) Sonya Jacobs, 700 University Avenue, the measure has passed, so now the microscope is on. She said that a City's procurements practices should to a large degree reflect the community that they serve. She said when she looks at this council, she sees a reflection of the city. She sees in District 1,2,3,4, & 5 respectively a reflection of what the City of Monroe looks like. She said for every council member when they come before this body, when they look at the procurement practices, when they look at the contracting, then you should see yourself reflected. She said Madame Chair should see black women reflected in contracting in this city. She said they should see some Ms. Juanita Woods reflected in these contracts. She said to Mrs. Ezernack, Mr. Harvey, Mr. Marshall respectively, if they can't see that and they don't sit there and allow that to happen. She heard them say that they were having conversations with each other, but they are not having conversations with the minority business community, not close to the amount that they should. She said that has to change. Mrs. Jacobs said they are going to see if we are going to become OneRoe in this quarter of a million dollars that we have given carte blanche. She doesn't see Mr. Kelly, maybe her eyes were deceiving her, but she said she heard him when he said the City is doing everything they can. She takes exception to that because they have been out here, bringing the people to the City and they will bring more people to you, and they will see. She said let's move the needle finally and let's get some equity in this 2/3's black city.

(5.) Johnnie Thomas said she has three things to mention very quickly. She said to the Engineer and the Mayor, she knows she keeps talking about the redlight, and they mentioned to her that

the ditch had to be filled so the engineers have been out there, and she's been praying everyday that the redlight gets there in a hurry. She said that yesterday afternoon there was a terrible accident. She said everyone knows where she lives and there was a gentleman that had come through the stop sign, going about 65 to 70 mph behind the Civic Center where the gate was opened, his truck blew up and she was told that he had passed away. Ms. Thomas is still hoping and waiting for the red light, and she understands it takes time because it is a State Highway, but they still need it. She was under the impression that the City has Wednesday as a float day, when picking up trash?

Mayor Ellis noted if it is he was unaware of that.

The council explained that it is makeup day, and they work half a day.

Mr. Brandon Creekbaum, City Attorney said it is generally a half-scheduled day that way if they need to fill in extra routes.

Ms. Thomas said that she has been having her trash picked up every Tuesday and today it wasn't. She understands they are moving to the Northside and her trash is still waiting to be picked up and hopefully they will pick it up tomorrow. She said if they don't, she will call.

Mayor Ellis said if it's not picked up, call him on his cell and he will make sure it is picked up.

Ms. Thomas said that she most certainly will, she wants things done decent and in order. She said that we all should pray for our City and each other. She said that she can feel the tension here tonight and we all need to be of one accord and respect each other in every matter that we can.

(6.) Augusta Turner, 2252 Tower Drive, she said to Ms. Woods that she did leave her out about announcing her event. She said she is in her district and that she was the first person on her board for KOUS 96.3. She said that they are the oldest African American female owned station LPFM in the State of Louisiana. She said that they are having their 20th Year Celebration on June 24, 2023, at ULM in the Cypress Room. She said Mr. Heatherly will be dancing so you have to come out and see. She said she tried to get the Police Chief, but he had left, but Chief Terry Williams is always supportive, and they have not heard anything from the Council, but they still have room. She is trying to get the Mayor and tells him, if he doesn't know how to dance, she's sure he knows how to jump, so they are having a soul train line and they need some ladies to participate. Ms. Turner said they have people from different cities coming to participate in the dance off. They are having a celebrity DJ coming from Monroe, DJ Scott Banks, and DJ Show, and the Celebrity Dance Off is going to be one of the top issues here with a Greek show. She said they got their Alpha President to participate, she couldn't get the Omega's, but the Alpha's did step up to the plate. They are planning to have a good time, it's a birthday celebration, not a concert, they have Rude from Baton Rouge, Sam Butler from Montgomery, Alabama, their guest artist is Ms. West Love, and she is one of the hottest female artists out there. Mr. Vince Hutchinson, he's the original Heavy Stone Band, in Baton Rouge Louisiana, and their host is Ms. Angel Faye Russell. She said she Ms. Marie spoke about everything she had going on. Mr. Turner said if you bought one of those VIP tickets you would have whole catfish, Grouper, smoked oysters, shrimp all provided by Aramark, by ULM. She said general admission tickets are \$40 dollars and they will receive light hors d'oeuvres that's provided by Aramark. She asks that everyone come and show love for the oldest African American female owned station.

Ms. Woods asked when and what time is that event.

Ms. Turner answered June 24th and show starts at 6:00pm.

Ms. Woods asked how much the VIP tickets were.

Ms. Turner said \$75.00 dollars.

Mr. Marshall asked was the location, Bayou Pointe.

Ms. Turner answered you know we are eating your food.

Ms. Johnnie Thomas announced that there is something new opening up in South Monroe, Saturday, that's Juneteenth and Sunday is Father's Day, she said we have a new food truck park

on the corner of Texas Avenue and South 8th Street, she said she is expecting everyone to come out, they will have a comedian there.

Mr. Marshall said he forget to mention that. He said it is called Legend's Plaza Food Truck Park.

Ms. Thomas said that the Food trucks will start to come out at 11:00, bring your lawn chairs, swings for the children, it is going to be really nice. She said that it will be gated, and it will be nice to come out and enjoy.

There being no further business to come before the council, the meeting was adjourned at 7:38pm., upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack and it was seconded by Mr. Marshall.

Mrs. Kema Dawson

Chairman

Ms. Carolus S. Riley

Council Clerk

Mrs. Rachel N. Washington

Council Research Coordinator