

Monroe City Council Legal and Regular Session
November 23, 2021
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, November 23, 2021, at the Council's regular meeting place, 400 Lea Joyner Memorial Expressway, City Council Chambers/City Hall Building, Monroe, Louisiana.

The Honorable Carday Marshall, Sr., Chairman, called the meeting to order.

The roll call was done by Ms. Carolus Riley, Council Clerk.

Council members present for roll call: Ms. Juanita Woods, Mr. Carday Marshall, Sr., and Mrs. Kema Dawson.

Council member (s) absent: Mr. Douglas Harvey and Mrs. Gretchen Ezernack.

Chairman Marshall declared a quorum.

The Invocation was done by Reverend Sam Moore, Pastor, Flowery Mount Baptist Church, and the Pledge of Allegiance led by Councilman Marshall.

COMMUNICATIONS & SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. Ms. Woods welcomed and thanked everyone for attending; she wished everyone a safe and happy holiday season. She thanked First Missionary Baptist Church, and Pastor Thomas for the sharing of the turkey giveaway that blessed 15 families in her district. She shared the following information regarding feed back from her recent meetings with constituents and said concerns would be submitted to administration; she thanked her constituents for sharing their concerns with some regarding the Renwick Street bridge crosswalk. She said it would be beautified, and she thanked Mayor Ellis for being a person of his word to having the bridge done. She thanked Senator Jackson for her assistance with the information regarding the color of painting for the bridge and it can be painted blue. The committee including Dr. Davis, Principal of Carroll High School, Senator Jackson, Councilman Marshall, Vitus Shell, and herself have met and discussed the color and design. They are also looking at putting an elevator on each side of the cross walk overpass to accommodate the handicap and those with bicycles; she commented in the upcoming weeks that she will be offering resolutions that will initiate a study for the development of the four corners of Renwick Street and 165. Another study will be to beautify the main artery that leads into District 3 including Renwick, Louberta, and Elm Streets, along with Powell Avenue to include sidewalks, and lighting. She will initiate efforts to create an advisory council for the community centers to discuss how to best utilize the centers. Another study will be to address the ditch that borders White, Pippin, Gayton, Owl, and Barlow Streets as they are all dead end streets which runs off Sherrouse Street, there are problems with the residences off those streets, and the ditches that border the properties are starting to erode and want to look at what it would need to take care of it. She wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

2. Mrs. Dawson thanked those for attending and for listening online. She wished everyone a happy Thanksgiving and said there is a lot to be thankful for. She thanked her Pastor, Rev. Tegitra Thomas of First Missionary Baptist Church, and her church family for the donation of 75 turkeys to the City making a difference in the communities with 15 turkeys being equally distributed to each Council member district. Mrs. Dawson thanked everyone that came out and supported the Thanksgiving gospel musical held at the Civic Center, it was well attended and successful.

3. Chief Bryant was present on behalf of Mayor Ellis; he commented that Mayor Ellis was traveling today and sent his greetings and best wishes. He thanked everyone for the turkey giveaway of fifty plus turkeys at the Civic Center and invited all to the Christmas tree lighting ceremony on December 3, 2021.

Council Chairman Marshall welcomed each one present and those watching on social media. He thanked Public Works employees for their assistance when they stopped and helped a group of elderly women cleaning up an area of Malvern Street. The women were very grateful, and it made a huge difference in the area. He thanked former City Councilman Kenneth Wilson and his organization P.E.E.P. for donating turkeys and gift bags in the district. His work in the community began over eighteen years ago and he continues serving the community today. Mr. Marshall thanked the Legacy riders of Monroe for their efforts in feeding over 100 homeless

individuals in downtown Monroe on Saturday. He thanked the contributors who assisted in the feeding effort, and they included Two Dudes, Does and others. He asked that everyone continue to be in the business of blessing others and wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

Upon a motion of Mrs. Dawson and a second by Ms. Woods, the minutes of the Legal and Regular session of November 9, 2021, were unanimously approved. (There were no public comments.)

PRESENTATION: NONE.

PUBLIC HEARINGS: NONE.

PROPOSED CONDEMNATIONS: Public Comment:

1. 701 Reed Street (D5) (Owner - Leon & Catherine Robinson) Upon a motion by Ms. Woods, second by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved for item to be removed from the agenda. (There were no public comments.)

Comments: Mrs. Sturdivant asked if Council would ensure that the owners were present or not before removing item. Chairman Marshall inquired if owners were present, and they were not.

2. 2313 Jasmine Street (D1) (Owner - William Weirick) Upon a motion by Ms. Woods, second by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved for property to be condemned and property owner to be given 90 days or February 24, 2022, in which to bring the structure into compliance with the code or to demolish the structure and clean the lot. (There were no public comments.)

Comments: Chief Code Enforcement Officer Tommy James commented that he had spoken with Councilman Harvey regarding the property and that the property had been in this condition since November of last year. The owner started work on it and hasn't heard back from him. He explained the condition of the structure during the Power Point presentation and also commented that neighbors are complaining about the condition of the property.

3. 1012 South 8th Street (D4) (Owners - Shara Jackson, LaRhonda Jackson, Quincy Jackson, Linda Ellington Jackson, Linda Ellington Jackson, et al, Henry Jackson) Upon a motion by Mr. Marshall, second by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved for property to be condemned and property owner to be given 30 days or December 24, 2021, in which to bring the structure into compliance with the code or to demolish the structure and clean the lot. (There were no public comments.)

Comments: Power Point slides of pictorial evidence for the current state of the property and discussion on the property's condition were presented by Chief Code Enforcement Officer, Tommy James; he commented that the property was in bad shape. Mr. Marshall said he did go by to look at the property and that he was familiar with the dilapidated structure, and it is an eyesore.

ACCEPTANCE OR REJECTION OF BIDS: Public Comment NONE.

RESOLUTIONS AND MINUTE ENTRIES:

Council: Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Mrs. Dawson, a second by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution No. 8112a, granting an exception to the Open Container Ordinance to the Radio People and the HUB Music Hall for a Party "Roaring into 2022 w/Feathers & Fedoras" 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 Mrs. Dawson, second by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to consider thirty-two (32) Renewal Applications for a New 2022 Class A Alcoholic Beverage Permit. The Monroe Police Department has no disqualifying records and Sales Tax has been approved. (There were no public comments.)

(b) Upon a motion by Mrs. Dawson, second by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to consider twenty-one (21) Renewal Applications for a New 2022 Class B Alcoholic Beverage Permit. The Monroe Police Department has no disqualifying records and Sales Tax has been approved. (There were no public comments.)

(c) Upon a motion by Mrs. Dawson, second by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to consider one (1) Renewal Application for a New 2022 Class E Alcoholic Beverage Permit. The Monroe Police Department has no disqualifying records and Sales Tax has been approved. (There were no public comments.)

(d) Upon a motion by Mrs. Dawson, second by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to consider one (1) Renewal Application for a New 2022 Class G Alcoholic Beverage Permit. The Monroe Police Department has no disqualifying records and Sales Tax has been approved. (There were no public comments.)

(e) Upon a motion by Mrs. Dawson, a second by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution No. 8113, authorizing the participation in the LaMats Administered Cooperative Purchasing Joint Commission (LACPC) and the appointment of a representative and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Comments: Ms. Woods asked for more information on the agenda item; Ms. Rowell commented it is part of LMA purchasing services arm and it allows the city to participate in cooperative purchasing and they also have consultants on hand in areas such as Brownfield, capital outlay, millage management, and other specialized areas. They can also provide consultants to help with the DBE program, host DBE workshops and they specialize in other areas where they can provide assistance.

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

Legal Department: Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Mrs. Dawson, a second by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution No. 8114, of the Monroe City Council approving Mid South Extrusion for participation in the Industrial Tax Exemption Program at 2015 Jackson Street, Monroe, La 71202. (There were no public comments.)

Comments: Ms. Woods asked for explanation of agenda item; Mrs. Sturdivant said it was similar to exemption that were done to structures in the historic district; it is an industrial tax exemption. Midsouth is adding eight jobs and a total of 140 jobs with the construction, it's a four million project expansion they are doing. Ms. Woods thanked Mid South for investing in the community.

(b) Upon a motion by Ms. Woods, a second by Mrs. Dawson and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution No. 8115, of the Monroe City Council approving Delta Packaging, Inc. for participation in the Industrial Tax Exemption Program at 500 Exchange Place, Monroe, La 71201. (There were no public comments.)

Comments: Ms. Woods thanked Mr. Kight, owner of Delta Packaging for his continued investing in the community.

(c) Upon a motion by Mrs. Dawson, a second by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution No. 8116, authorizing the City's participation to join with the State of Louisiana and other local governmental subdivisions as a participant in the tentative National Settlements expressed in the Distributor Settlement Agreement and the Jansen Settlement Agreement (the "National Settlements") and Louisiana State Local Government Opioid Litigation Memorandum of Understanding and further providing with respect thereto.

Comments: Ms. Woods asked for explanation of item. Mrs. Sturdivant commented that it was a tentative settlement agreement and has to be approved by the governing body; it is a resolution for the city to join with the State of Louisiana and other local governmental units/subdivisions as a participant in the tentative national settlement.

Public Comments: Ms. Kenya Roberson, asked if there was a timeframe for the settlement and the notification of the received funds and the opportunity for eligible programs to receive the funds by proposals. Mrs. Sturdivant commented that the Attorney General has not issued any information on that, and there is a task force that will come up with the rules and guidelines on how to proceed if the funds are received.

Mayor's Office: Public Comment: NONE.

Department of Public Works: Public Comment: NONE.

Department of Community Affairs: Public Comment: NONE.

(a) Upon a motion by Mrs. Dawson, a second by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution No. 8117, authorizing the City of Monroe to accept the donation of the “Crawfish Dinner at the Zoo” Mural/Artwork located at the Louisiana Purchase Gardens & Zoo from Jay N. Davis to be utilized by the City of Monroe, and further providing with respect thereto.

Public Comments: Mr. Jay Davis, donor and professional artist was present and thanked the city for the opportunity to contribute to the community. Mrs. Dawson and Mr. Marshall thanked Mr. Davis for his donation of the mural/artwork.

Police Department: Public Comment: NONE.

Fire Department: Public Comment: NONE.

Engineering Services: Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Mrs. Dawson, a second by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution No. 8118, accepting the base bid of CW&W Contractors for the Riverbarge Street Improvements, and further authorizing an authorized city representative, to enter into and execute a contract for said work. (There were no public comments.)

(b) Upon a motion by Mrs. Dawson, a second by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution No. 8119, accepting the base bid of Lathan Construction, in the amount \$159,135.00, for the Forsythe Pool Demolition, and further authorizing an authorized city representative, to enter into and execute a contract for said work. (There were no public comments.)

(c) Upon a motion by Mrs. Dawson, a second by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution No. 8120, authorizing an authorized city representative to execute Supplemental Agreement No. 3 (superseding) to amend Article II between the Department of Transportation and Development and the City of Monroe for the Kansas Lane Extension and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Comments: Ms. Woods asked for explanation of item. Mrs. Sturdivant commented that it was an amendment to Article II between the La. DOTD and the City of Monroe.

(d) Upon a motion by Mrs. Dawson, a second by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution No. 8121, authorizing an authorized city representative, to execute Change Order No. One (1) to the Entergy Substation Cross Drain Contract, between the City of Monroe and WL Bass Construction Company for an increase in the contract amount of \$17,800.00 and an additional nine (9) days added to contract and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

(e) Upon a motion by Mrs. Dawson, a second by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to adopt Resolution No. 8122, accepting the base bid of Missouri Loop LLC, in the amount of \$38,500.00, for the purchase of Wetland Mitigation Credits for the Young’s Bayou Retention Area Project, and further authorizing an authorized city representative, to enter into and execute a contract for said work.

Comments: Chairman Marshall asked for explanation of item on behalf of concerned constituents.

Public Comments: Mr. Randy Denmon, commented that he was the Engineer for the job and explained that it was a state and city project to build a 20 acre retention pond in Booker T parts, and it’s for an environmental permit for it; there are approximately 3-4 wetlands on the project and it’s on the Corps of Engineers permit. They took bids for the mitigation credits, and this is the low bid. He said subsequent to the purchase of them, that the Corps will give them the permit, and they plan to advertise the project this spring. Ms. Woods asked for location of the retention pond; Mr. Denmon explained it was located where the old dog pound in the past was located, near the oxidation pond close to the airport; it is east of the Booker T Washington neighborhood. Ms. Woods said there were two retention ponds, including the one near the old city dump was located; He said it was the same project, but there are two phases of the project, as the one near the old dump is going to be a 60 acre pond and this one will be a 20 acre pond and they have the permitting and right a way for this phase and once they get

the permitting and right a way for the other phase, they will move forward with it; no permits have received for the one near the old dump, it is more complicated, but do have people working on it.

BREAK IF NEEDED: NONE.

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS & ORDINANCES:

Public Comment:

(a) Upon a motion by Mrs. Dawson, a second by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance authorizing Mayor Friday Ellis to enter into and execute Lease Amendment No. 1 by and between the City of Monroe and the United States of America a/k/a General Services Administration, and further providing with respect thereto. (Airport) (There were no public comments.)

Comments: Ms. Woods asked for explanation of item. Mrs. Sturdivant commented that it was for the government to rent 2833 sq ft; there is already a lease in place with them; it is for the TSA.

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

CITIZENS PARTICIPATION:

1. Stonewall Hunter, citizen, spoke regarding Free Me Association and MCAL, thanking the City and supporters for a great season of football, and will be starting basketball this week. He commented regarding services that the Free Me Association provide include sporting programs, mentorship, social development, and their Excel after school programs. The organization is designed to improve the lives of citizens starting with the children up to young adult ages. They will market information on social media regarding their future program calendar information. Council members thanked the association for the work they are doing in the community.
2. Kenya Roberson, citizen, thanked Mayor Ellis and staff for their participation in the first virtual Mayor's roundtable. She advised the Council that they are in the stage of planning their first virtual political engagement to be held on December 9, 2021, 6:00 p.m. , and they will be receiving information.
3. Sam Moore, Pastor, Educator, citizen, spoke regarding concerns that were mentioned during his attendance at a round table discussion; his concerns of the violence in the city and the lack of improvement. He stated the last Mayor it seemed was blamed for everything that took place, as well as the Chief of Police. He said it seems the violence hasn't slowed down one bit and asked what was going on and what was the problem. He asked why there was a lack of commitment in removing guns from the hands of young people and asked what would be done and what is being done and who would stand up and who would be held accountable. He commented about a conversation that he had a couple of weeks ago with the Superintendent, the Mayor, and Chief of Police referencing a situation of a shooting at a place, Evil Vision; they asked him about a Sherrouse student, as he was arrested at the school on Tuesday. He commented that a person that age can't legally purchase a firearm and has heard they are breaking into cars and do know that there aren't that many cars being broken into. He asked what was going on and what would happen to make a difference in the city to curtail the violence in the neighborhoods of color and why does it continue to happen. The crime rate has increased and has not decreased but doesn't hear anything being talked about or being done, but there was a platform and do wish the Mayor was present today. He addressed Mr. Marshall and the Council asking him what is being done and what will be done to make a change and make a difference.

Mr. Marshall commented that what they are doing and since they are present and under public eye, commented that he would share what he was doing and have been doing now and before being on Council. He stated that he has been having meetings, and have been putting together programs for the youth and is currently working on a Cub Scouts program in South Monroe, and also working with ULM committee and discussing ways that the University can work in the community to help put hands around kids; he said there are several things that can be done, but it takes us all and we can sit and point fingers all day, but if we don't come to the table together and come up with solutions, then we are waving in the wind, it takes us all. He said one person can't stop crime that has been going on for years; he said he grew up in the element and when he was younger, it is a lot worse than what it is now in the streets, because he was in there and do know firsthand. He commented that he knows what

the kids go through, and it starts at home, as well. You have to hold people accountable, hold parents accountable, it takes a village, and we have to come together and be on one accord, and not just come with the eyesight that no one is doing anything, there is a lot going on behind the scenes and eyesight that people don't see. He said they are trying to put programs together, increase programs in the recreation centers, partner with organizations like MCAL that are doing things. He said one thing that he has learned is that we are here to do something, but we can't do everything and what we can do within our specific purpose, then we do that; there are people that are doing things and doing them well, and these are people that we support in those avenues. We can't have our fingers so spread out that we are not completing or accomplishing anything and do propose that everyone will work together to get our hands around our kids. He commented that he didn't leave the area because he chose to want to make a difference in the areas. He said there are some people that say things, they are on the other side of town, and it is easy to criticize when you're not in the midst of stuff and until we get to the point where we aren't divided, we will just be having conversations. This includes the Mayor, the Chief of Police, but it takes everyone.

Ms. Woods commented that one of the things that have come out of her meetings are the same conversations; she commented that one thing she's going to author a resolution that is going to put a curfew back in place for the communities, because there are too many children running the streets. She said her curfew is not one that will be picking on a certain group of kids, it will be in place for everybody and at a certain time of the night and it needs to be around 8:30 p.m. and they need to be at home. She said the parents need to know where they are and do think that if the children are off the street, that will be one of the things and the parents are going to be held accountable for their children being home; she said she doesn't like any dark spaces and want no dark spaces in her district and want to improve the lighting, once that happens it deters crime too and folks don't have places to hide and get in trouble, put in lights and make them bright. These two things will be authored within the next meeting or two, before the end of the year. She said she was on the Council when they got beat down to the ground about being the most crime in the country, most murders or whatever, and truly it's not; she said someone got buried in her district on Monday, and there was a repass, he was 21 years old, enough is enough and we have to do something.

Mr. Sam Moore stated that his comments were not that of criticism; Mr. Marshall said he didn't take it as criticism. Mr. Moore asked for the strategic plans in order to address the issues and the cub scouts and things are really great but doesn't affect the kids and the root of the issue, there is a systemic problem and in order to address the systemic problem, would have to get to the root of the issues and the root of the issue is why are there so many kids have guns, this is the real issue. He said he has spoken with the Mayor, work with the Chief and help them consistently because of his position in the school system, and as a human being, and someone concerned, but the root of the issue is getting to the problem. There are too many young people with guns. He told Ms. Woods that what has to be considered with curfews is that sporting events aren't over until 8:30 p.m. She said they would look at the time on it; Mr. Moore said the timeframe has to made aware of athletic activities around 9:30 pm – 10:00 pm. Mr. Marshall said you have to look at kids out during the day, the truancy concerns; Mr. Moore said truancy is another area, and the judicial system is failing the people when it comes to truancy because as a truancy officer for the school system, when they issue a summons to a parent and months later the parent goes to court and they get a slap on the wrist; he said as long as young people know that as a juvenile, they can take someone's life at 14 or 15 years of age and will get juvenile life and then at 21 is set free, it no deterrent.

Chief Jimmy Bryant commented to Mr. Moore that there were things that he asked questions that were kind of specific and most of it comes to the Mayor's office; they agree wholeheartedly with the curfew, the Mayor has been diligently, yet aggressively working with it. It will make some people uncomfortable, but the bottom line is that it all starts at home. Chief Bryant commented to Mr. Moore that the shooting he was referring to and the kid that was present, and one of them was 8 years old and had no business out at that time of the night, that's a problem and that goes home. He said the schools, and everybody plays a part in it; he said in Mr. Moore mentioning the justice system and that most of the kids are repeat offenders, almost every single one of them have a record and they have done something in the past and they are let go, and everyone should be held accountable on this. It doesn't stop there and that's all working together, it's not a rock over here at the school, or a rock at the home, or a rock at the Mayor's office, it's everybody playing their part; He said if a kid is going to be a bad apple, then they need to be held accountable for it, no matter how uncomfortable it is for anybody, bottom line it needs to happen. He said there are a plethora of things going on and the police department is addressed with, but help is needed. He commented that MCAL needed some help from the city on dealing with the kids and the

programs, they got it and that's a part of it, but it doesn't stop there. He commented that the Judges need to say, enough is enough, it stops and if you want to continue to do the stuff, then you would have to pay the price, and the parents are going to pay a price that if they don't keep an 8 year old in the house at that time of the night where they are out shooting guns. He commented that he saw the video that like the kids are used to seeing it. He said he is sorry, but that we can't have that and that he is passionate about it, but it needs to stop with everyone playing a part in it, not just one entity, not just the city, or the parents at home, because they need help. He said the old saying that it takes a village, well it is time to come together, and everybody own up, man up, woman up and do what they need to do.

Mr. Sam Moore thanked Council and said he would come back next time and talk to them some more.

Mrs. Sturdivant commented that they have had meetings with Mr. Moore on the truancy issue and did change some procedures in her office, the Prosecutors office to move them quicker. She said she has been meeting with her Prosecutors and hopefully on the next agenda, they are going to along with the Mayor update the truancy ordinance, it should be on the next agenda and hopefully it will give them a little more teeth to hold the parents accountable. She told Ms. Woods that they also are working with the Mayor on the curfew issue, and Brandon is doing some research into it as well and maybe it's something that they can work together on.

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 6:56 p.m., upon a motion of Ms. Woods and seconded by Mr. Marshall. (There were no public comments)

Mr. Carday Marshall, Sr.
Council Chairman

Ms. Carolus S. Riley
Council Clerk

Ms. Jacqueline Benjamin
Council Secretary