

City Hall, Monroe, Louisiana
June 10, 2025
6:00 p.m.

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

The Honorable Chairman Juanita G. Woods, called the meeting to order. She then asked the clerk to call roll.

There were present: Mr. Harvey, Ms. Woods, Mr. McFarland, & Mr. Muhammad

There was absent: Mrs. Ezernack

Chairman Woods announced that a quorum was present, and that the Invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance would be led by Mr. Muhammad or his designee.

The Invocation was led by Pastor DeRon L. Talley St. Joseph Missionary Baptist Church West Monroe, LA.

COMMUNICATIONS & SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS:

(1.) Mr. Harvey had no announcements.

(2.) Mr. McFarland said it is good to be here on this evening, and he spoke to the air conditioning project. He said Chairlady Woods and himself partnered with Senator Katrina Jackson-Andrews, Representative Adrian Fisher, and Dr. Janet Floyd and were able to purchase 175 air conditioning. He said last week they were able to put out 89 of them and the second shipment should be in by June 11 but Region 3 of the M.W. Prince Hall Grand Lodge who are installing them are headed to their annual convention. He said when they come back they will be able to install the remainder of the air conditioners. He thanked God for the opportunity to be able to bless many senior citizens and so many people have been appreciative of the air conditioners. He noted he will be having a Community Meeting Monday June 30 the at 6:00 location to be determined. He said some have asked him to come into a certain neighborhood to have the meeting and by next week he will have the information out if he is able to do that. He thanked Ms. Johnnie for helping the Council reach so many senior citizens to get air conditioners. He said he appreciated all his constituents for what they do with and for the Council.

(3.) Mr. Muhammad announced his upcoming Community Meeting will be a Conflict Resolution Symposium and Training on Saturday at the Henrietta Johnson Community Center from 1–4 PM. The training, led by a national trainer from New Orleans, will focus on mediation and de-escalation skills, with the goal of developing a local initiative where individuals are prepared to intervene in violent situations. He also shared that he attended the funeral of Mr. Damion Moore II at First Missionary Baptist Church, where Reverend Tegitra K. Thomas delivered a powerful message on "the straight gate." Additionally, he attended a Dazzle Dance recital and thanked Ms. DeTiege for organizing it. He expressed appreciation to Mr. Louis Tolliver, Director of Public Works, for cleaning up King Oaks. He noted he recently completed a 5-day fast to grow spiritually and draw closer to God. He said he had prayed the City wouldn't have another shooting before this meeting and they didn't. He said if they all get in that spirit he thinks they can make a change in the City.

(4.) Mayor Friday Ellis welcomed everyone this evening and thanked Mayor Betty Alford-Olive of Bastrop, LA for being present.

(5.) Ms. Woods announced the retirement party for Mrs. Stacey Rowell, Director of Administration, and she thanked her for her service. She highlighted the success of the business hub as a true one-stop shop. She invited everyone to the 1900 Club's Founder's Day event on Saturday, June 14th, from 4–7:30 PM, noting the organization's work with addiction recovery. She addressed recent community losses and thanked Monroe and local organizations for their support, emphasizing the need for action. She announced her Chat & Chew event on Wednesday, June 18th, from 10 AM–12 PM at Powell Street Recreation Center to discuss community issues and youth support. She commended Bishop McFarland and the Mason brothers for their work in installing the air conditioners, explaining the delay was due to a Home Depot backorder. She urged residents

to answer unknown calls as they may be related to deliveries. Lastly, she announced the Prayer Session on Saturday at 1:00 pm and a Stop the Violence March starting at Carroll High School to Powell street. She said come out because we can't pray enough and they have to continue to keep the community lifted in prayer.

Upon motion of Mr. Harvey and seconded by Mr. McFarland, the minutes of the Legal and Regular session of May 27, 2025, were unanimously approved. (There were no public comments.)

PROPOSED CONDEMNATION

The following condemnations were considered:

1. 1311 South 8th (D4) Owner: Pearlie Irby Notice to show cause was served. Photographic evidence was presented. There was no one present. Upon motion of Mr. McFarland, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved, the building was condemned, and the property owner given 30 days in which to bring the structure into compliance with the Code or demolish the Structure and clean the lot. (There were no public comments.)

Mr. Tommy James, Code Enforcement Officer, said this is an open dilapidated structure with extremely high grass. They are asking the property be condemned giving the owner 30 days.

Mr. McFarland motion to condemn the property giving the owner 30 days to bring it up to code or demolish the property.

2. 127 Egan (D4) Owner: Peggy Ann Jones Notice to show cause was served. Photographic evidence was presented. There was no one present. Upon motion of Mr. McFarland, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved, the building was condemned, and the property owner given 30 days in which to bring the structure into compliance with the Code or demolish the Structure and clean the lot. (There were no public comments.)

Mr. James said this is structure that burned March of last year, and it is an open and unsafe structure. They are asking that the property be condemned, giving the owner 30 days.

Mr. McFarland motion to condemn the property giving the owner 30 days to bring it up to code or demolish the property.

3. 104 Jason (D5) Owner: Huey Mathis & Lorthel Pratt, et al. Notice to show cause was served. Photographic evidence was presented. There was no one present. Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mr. McFarland and unanimously approved, the building was condemned, and the property owner given 30 days in which to bring the structure into compliance with the Code or demolish the Structure and clean the lot. (There were no public comments.)

Mr. James said this is an open, dilapidated structure that has become an attractive nuisance. They are asking that the property be condemned, giving the owner 30 days.

Mr. Muhammad motion the condemn the property giving the owner 30 days.

The following condemnation was removed:

1. Upon motion of Mr. McFarland, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved to remove 104 Carlton (D4) Owner: Estate of William and Gladys Porter c/o Treshan Breaux from the agenda. The property has been cleared. (There were no public comments.)

RESOLUTIONS AND MINUTE ENTRIES:

Council:

The Chairman Open the Hearing and seeing no one come forward the hearing was closed.

(a.) Upon motion of Mr. McFarland, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8936 removing Karlis Jackson from the Monroe Planning Commission. (There were no public comments.)

(b.) Upon motion of Mr. McFarland, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8937 approving the appointment of Bishop Danny Hunt to the Monroe Planning Commission and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

(c.) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mr. Muhammad and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8938 approving the appointment of Robert Riddle to the Monroe Planning Commission and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

(d.) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mr. Muhammad and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8939 appointing the News-Star as the Official Journal of the City of Monroe, Louisiana, pursuant to the Louisiana R.S. 43:141 et. seq. and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

(e.) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Ms. Woods, to confirm the appointment of Chief Timothy Williams as Fire Chief for the City of Monroe. The motion failed. (Ms. Woods – nay, Mr. McFarland – nay, Mr. Muhammad – nay) (There were no public comments.)

Chief Jimmie Bryant, Chief Operating Officer, explained that the selection process for the new Fire Chief was thoughtful and thorough. The top five qualified candidates were submitted to the Mayor, who then notified the City Council of the chosen appointee, Timothy Williams, on May 14, 2025, via letter and email. The process considered testing scores, experience, background, and Council feedback. Supporting documents such as a resume, transcript, and letters of support were included. Chief Williams, a third-generation firefighter, has served Bastrop for 25 years and has been its Fire Chief since 2002. He rose through the ranks and managed several key areas, including fire prevention, fleet, facilities, and PIAL ratings. He scored highest on the State Civil Service test and exceeds all job qualifications. He emphasized that Chief Williams' leadership will benefit both the Monroe Fire Department and the community.

Mayor Ellis expressed gratitude to Mr. Williams for his interest in the position, his dedication, and his service to the people of Bastrop. He said it was a pleasure getting to know him and wished him the best, noting that Monroe is missing out on a great man, but Bastrop will benefit from his continued leadership. He thanked Mr. Williams for his support and commended his character

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

The Chairman Open the Hearing and seeing no one come forward the Hearing was closed.

(a.) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mr. Muhammad and unanimously approved Ordinance No. 12,266 ratifying the 2025-2027 Working agreement between the City of Monroe and the Monroe Fire Fighters Association, International Assoc. of Firefighters, Local no. 629, AFL-CIO. (There were no public comments.)

Mr. McFarland wanted clarification that this agreement is for two years.

Mr. Brandon Creekbaum, City Attorney, said that is correct.

Mr. McFarland wanted to know what time period do they start the negotiations for this agreement.

Mr. Creekbaum stated that the Firefighters Union typically begin negotiations well before the contract expires, though the timing can vary depending on the Union's leadership. In his past experience, they usually reach out early, and he expects negotiations to start around December of next year.

Mr. McFarland stated for clarification December of 2026 and will expire April 30th.

Mr. Creekbaum noted June 2027.

Mr. McFarland noted they had conversations about raises for the fire fighters being retroactive. He wanted to clarify that Mr. Creekbaum stated at the last meeting the raises would go back to May 1st.

Mr. Creekbaum said yes, this is a circumstance where the Attorney General has said they can be retroactive. He said it has been budgeted and approved as part of the fiscal year, and the delay in the raises and getting the contract approved and ratified was through no fault of the employees. He said the raises were intended as part of the budgeting process, and this is the paperwork that catches up to it.

Mr. McFarland wanted to know when the last agreement terminate and in what month.

Mr. Creekbaum said he believes it terminated in 2024, but there is a provision in the agreement that says it will continue year to year until a new agreement is ratified. He said the month he does not recall.

Mr. McFarland expressed concern that the previous agreement was allowed to fester without a new contract in place. He noted that the last agreement was terminated in 2024 and was reportedly handled by the previous Council, not the current one, which he finds problematic. He emphasized the importance of having continuity in agreements and requested that Mr. Creekbaum state on the record the start and end dates of the proposed two-year contract.

Mr. Creekbaum noted the effective date of this contract shall commence on May 28, 2025, and expire on May 31, 2027. He said those dates were not updated to reflect the additional Council meetings that came through. He said it obviously can't be effective before Council ratifies it and those days shall be altered upon ratification June 11, 2025, and expire June 10, 2027.

Mr. McFarland said, in other words, it's not going to be a retroactive contract, and the agreement will begin as stated in the document. He said they are now going to move the dates to reflect June 11, 2025, and terminate on June 10, 2027. He said he wants to make sure they are doing this the right way because somebody dropped the ball on getting this done, and he doesn't want the firefighters penalized because of it. He wanted to know if they need to state that the contract will start retroactively on May 1 and terminate on May 30, 2025.

Mr. Creekbaum said they addressed that in the Ordinance that it will be ratified in the contract and the section in the ordinance says specifically the collective bargaining agreement includes wage raises for certain employees that were budgeted and appropriated in the FY25-26 budget which shall be retroactive to May 1, 2025, to the date budget was instituted. He said there will be no penalty to the fire fighters.

Mr. McFarland wanted to know if the contract cannot be retroactive.

Mr. Creekbaum said they are not going to date the contract back to May 1st.

Mr. McFarland wanted to know what date Mr. Creekbaum think they need to be working on the next contract.

Mr. Creekbaum said December 2026 is when they will start looking at that contract. He said they usually have a preliminary meeting and discussion with the firefighters Union probably shortly before Christmas.

Mr. McFarland wanted to know who is the soul determiner of who will be the negotiators for this contract.

Mr. Creekbaum noted the Mayor.

Mr. McFarland wanted to know how many can he place on that committee.

Mr. Creekbaum said it just says the Mayor's designee.

Mr. McFarland wanted to know if it is unlimited.

Mr. Creekbaum said that is his understanding, yes.

Mr. McFarland noted that it needed to be stated that it is unlimited. He said he doesn't like how this was put together. He said the horse got out of the stable before the Council could take a good look at it, and he doesn't want that to happen the next time. He said they have to be more involved in these matters if they want the Council's support. He said it makes good sense that, if they want the Council's support, there should be someone from the Council at the table.

Citizen's Participation:

(1.) Ms. Johnnie Thomas, 414 South 8th Street, noted concerns with the trash and garbage on the Southside. She said there is only so much Public Works and Code Enforcement can do.

(2.) Mr. Tyrone Dickens, K-9, 3004 Dick Taylor, said he is returning back to take the community back over and he created "Coming Together Tour" and "Stop the Violence. He said he asking the Council to come out and the Mayor as well. He said he is asking the Council for their blessing to get back on the agenda and he will get with the police department because the event will be August 30th at Chennault Park. He said he was told once he rents the park it belongs to him, and he has the right to ask officer or security to search vehicles if they will be asked to leave. He also inquired about the process to get back on the Council agenda.

Ms. Woods said that it is something they would get with Mr. Creekbaum to get it done.

(3.) Mr. Curtis Garth, 2300 Georgia Street, stated that his civil rights are being violated after he was arrested by Monroe Police while attempting to pick up a form from the Ouachita Parish Police Jury. He said he has been trying to get an appointment with the Department of Justice to understand what issue the federal government has with him. He emphasized that he is not mentally ill and mentioned having a judgment order on file at the 4th Judicial Court related to mismanagement of funds. He expressed frustration that no one is asking questions or taking his concerns seriously and requested assistance in setting up an appointment with the Department of Justice.

There being no further business to come before the council, the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 6:58 p.m.

Ms. Juanita G. Woods
Chairman

Ms. Carolus S. Riley
Council Clerk

Ms. Ileana Murray
Staff Secretary

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