

City Hall, Monroe, Louisiana
August 12, 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 Rodney McFarland I, called the meeting to order. He then asked the clerk to call roll.

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

There was absent: None.

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

The Invocation was led by Senior Pastor Rose of Sharon Baptist Church A B Davis Johnson.

ITEMS FOR SEPARATE CONSIDERATION - A Resolution amending the order of condemnation for 4103 Beale Street and further providing with respect thereto. (Proposed Condemnation No. 3 added to the agenda). Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved. (There were no public comments.)

Mr. Brandon Creekbaum, City Attorney, said this request is to amend the January 2023 condemnation order. He noted the owner has made some progress and is asking for more time but must reimburse the City for any demolition cost already expended.

COMMUNICATIONS & SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. Mr. Harvey had no announcements.

2. Mrs. Ezernack had no announcements.

3. Ms. Woods thanked attendees, noting the good turnout despite the weather. She reminded drivers to be cautious in school zones as school has resumed. She announced the August 23rd "Justa Cowboy" Black Rodeo, which will include a Saturday morning parade, tailgating, and the rodeo that evening. Addressing recent conversations, she said she ran for office to be a voice for those who wouldn't speak up, not to obstruct city matters. She emphasized the community is on the verge of a major transformation, citing significant traffic on I-20 related to a large project. She clarified she is not obstructing anything and outlined the timeline for selecting a new fire chief: former Chief Terry Williams retired July 1, 2024; a resolution for Captain Daniel Overturf was presented on November 26, 2024, but he was not selected; the next viable candidate was presented June 10, 2025. She noted the Council's role is to confirm or deny candidates, and if denied, another should be brought forth.

4. Mr. Muhammad had no comments.

5. Mayor Friday Ellis noted the City had a great round table with Congresswoman Julia Letlow about the next round of appropriations and upcoming projects. He said he had a good meeting with Coach Bryant Vincent and the University of Louisiana at Monroe football team, where he spoke with them about this season and received positive feedback on why they chose ULM and Monroe. He mentioned having the opportunity to ride with the City sanitation workers which he does every year. He stated he also had a great meeting with the new ULM President Carrie Castille about her plans and how they can work together. He said they recognized an outstanding fire fighters employee of the month to honor hard work in the City. He reminded everyone about "Rolling on the Riverfront" on September 13, 2025, with many small business vendors. Lastly, he announced the Mayor's Charity Scholarship Golf Tournament, a partnership with Entergy, which has raised over \$800,000 in scholarships for students in the area.

6. Mr. McFarland said he would reserve communications for a later time in the meeting.

Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Ms. Woods, the minutes of the Legal and Regular Session of July 22, 2025, were unanimously approved.(There were no public comments.)

RESOLUTIONS AND MINUTES ENTRIES:

Council

(a.) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Ms. Woods and approved Resolution No. 8965 authorizing the Monroe City Council to file a lawsuit seeking to declare La. R.S 33:381, as amended by Act 452 of 2025 Regular Legislative Sessions, invalid or unconstitutional and further providing with respect thereto. (Mr. Harvey & Mrs. Ezernack Nay) (There were no public comments.)

(b.) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Ms. Woods and approved Resolution No. 8966 requesting that the Governor refrain from appointing a Fire Chief under provisions of La R.S., 33:381, as amended by Act 452 of 2025 Regular Legislative Session, and further providing with respect thereto.

Ms. Therese Caissie, 502 Cole Avenue, said she believes the Governor should appoint the City's Fire Chief. She noted she was present when two qualified nominees were considered previously and questioned why the process has taken so long. She emphasized the importance of filling the position quickly for the city's needs.

Ms. Johnnie Thomas, 414 South 8th Street, said Monroe is too small for the Governor to appoint its Fire Chief. She felt it doesn't make sense, and she believes the City can handle this itself.

Ms. Amanda Edge, 104 Creekside Drive, West Monroe, La, Vice-President of the Monroe Chamber of Commerce Governmental Affairs Committee, urged the Mayor and Council to put the city first and work together for the good of Monroe. She emphasized that Monroe is the hub of Northeast Louisiana, with opportunities for growth as new industries and families seek a place to settle. She warned that division could damage the city's momentum and image, stressing that companies want to see unity. Speaking on behalf of business owners, young people, and families, she called for leadership that models respectful cooperation, noting this moment is a rare chance to strengthen Monroe's role as a regional example.

Mr. Muhammad said he believes the issue can be resolved but disagrees with the Mayor's use of Legislative help, which has complicated matters and put the Council in a position where they must fight and work together, though he would prefer cooperation without fighting. Citing City Charter section 8-08, he said it supports the city managing its own affairs without legislative interference. He questioned what would happen if the Council had gone to the Governor, noting the law says the Governor "may" appoint, not "shall," meaning the Mayor and Council could resolve it themselves. He said 17 qualified candidates applied for Fire Chief, but the Council has only seen two in a year. Rejecting the word "obstruction," he said the Council's goal is to select the best candidate, not block progress, and the issue is about qualifications, not race. While acknowledging it is the Mayor's appointment, he said those who helped elect the Mayor see no representation in leadership. Mr. Muhammad said the Council will fight for what is right and stand on the truth. He said he didn't like what Senator Cathy did, and he should have advise the Mayor to work with the Council and said neither the Governor nor anyone in Baton Rouge should appoint a Fire Chief for Monroe. He asked how it would look if the Mayor gave up his power and would the Fire Chief report to the Governor instead.

Ms. Woods stated when she was Chairman the Mayor and her talked all the time and the Mayor would ask who does she want? She said the person with all the bells and whistle and most qualified. She said she wants to make sure the person is respected by all of the fire department. She said the community often knows what is going on before the Council and she has heard troubling things about some candidates. She said she doesn't know how many people took the test, but she knows there were more than two. She said if those two didn't make it someone else should have been brought before the Council in a timely manner. She said they need to be on one accord and that is where she is on this. She said they should work together fill the positions and move forward. She said she is all about what is right and doing what is best for this community.

Mrs. Ezernack said she has kept quiet in the last couple of meetings but, after hearing Councilman Muhammad and Ms. Woods, if that is the case, then they should go back to item one, remove it, have another vote, and work it out. She said, like everyone else, she wants what is right for the community, even if they differ in opinion, and believes they all want to see it move forward. She said she doesn't care what color the Fire Chief, Police Chief, or department head is, as long as they

are qualified to do the job. She said they can work this out, but not under the pressure of a lawsuit or a letter to the Governor.

Mr. Harvey said this is a failure on all their parts, it's just what it is, and unfortunately, they are in the spot where the legislation should or shouldn't exist. He said they are in gridlock now, and he heard they may be getting national attention, but none of it is positive. Looking at the agenda, he said it includes things like alcohol permits and other things, but mostly shows the Council fighting with the Mayor, with not much that actually serves the community.

Mr. Muhammad said he appreciated Mrs. Ezernack's comments, noting the Council can rescind this Resolution but not the bill, which was the Mayor's action. He criticized the Mayor's videos for portraying the Council as villains and adding to the conflict. He said the situation is becoming overly complicated, but the City charter anticipated such challenges and protects the Council's right to govern without interference. He argued Senate Bill 220 was crafted specifically against Monroe with ill intent, rather than in the true spirit of the democratic process.

Mrs. Ezernack emphasized the importance of cooperation, suggesting the Mayor could ask the Governor to hold off while the Council works things out. She noted that the bill may be revoked, or whatever the term is they use in Baton Rouge, during the next legislative session, and stressed focusing on resolving the issue rather than debating past actions, comments, or inactions.

Mr. McFarland said everyone has spoken well but the real issue is broken trust. He argued that the Mayor is fighting the Council, not the other way around, and emphasized that the city charter, adopted in 1979, requires Council confirmation of appointments. He said the Mayor is misleading citizens by suggesting otherwise, and if this overreach is allowed, it will strip the Council of its power. He compared it to the Council seeking power to remove the Mayor at will, which he said others would oppose. He stated the Mayor has spread a false narrative that the Council obstructs everything, when records show they approved 98% of items. He said no Mayor has ever gotten everything they wanted, and the Council is right to ask questions rather than rubber-stamp decisions. He called attempts to bypass the charter "hogwash" and vowed to fight for democracy, transparency, and the people of Monroe. He said the Mayor has put things out there, and everybody thinks the Council should have "closed-mouth disease," not say anything, and have no rebuttal but they are sadly mistaken. He said he is going to fight for what is right, for democracy, and for the will of the people. He noted that while they may have different viewpoints, they should be able to disagree without falling out. He added that Friday Ellis will not be Mayor forever, and when a standard is set, the wrong person in office could create a problem if they have simply gone along just to go along. He said he has stated more than once that you can win the battle and still lose the war. He acknowledged there is a lot going on in Northeast Louisiana and that this situation is a black eye, but who threw the first punch is not being addressed because people don't want to say it

(c.) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Ms. Woods and approved Resolution No. 8967 authorizing the re-examination of the appointment of the City of Monroe's City Council Districts and further providing with respect thereto. (Mr. Harvey & Mrs. Ezernack Nay) (There were no public comments.)

Mrs. Ezernack noted to read the charter.

Mr. McFarland said he has read the matter multiple times, has a good understanding of it, and has obtained a legal opinion from City Attorney Brandon Creekbaum.

Mr. Harvey wanted to know if Mr. McFarland have any goals for this Resolution.

Mr. McFarland noted inspiration is what is being done in Texas, and they can tweak the lines because that was an issue with the citizens of Monroe when the previous Council voted. He said there were promises made not to do certain things that didn't go through.

(d.) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Ms. Woods and approved Resolution No. 8968 establishing City Council policy with respect with respect to certain mayoral appointments. (Mr. Harvey & Mrs. Ezernack Nay) (There were no public comments.)

Mr. Muhammad said this is a Resolution dealing with the investigation, and someone who is under investigation shouldn't be a department head until the investigation is over.

Mr. Harvey questioned whether the Council already have confirmation power and if they could factor that into their decisions.

Mr. Muhammad said they have been trying to do that, and they are to this point now.

Mrs. Ezernack wanted to know if the investigation is under the fire department as a whole.

Mr. Creekbaum stated that the Council Resolution authorized an investigation into financial issues at the Monroe Fire Department and did not name any specific employee or individual.

Mr. Harvey asked if, since no one is being named, the investigation applies to everyone or only to internal personnel, and if that is the correct interpretation.

Mr. Creekbaum stated he is not certain of Mr. Muhammad's intent behind the Resolution fully but that is one potential interpretation maybe.

Mr. Muhammad said this is dealing with Mayoral appointments not promotion.

(e.) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8969 granting an exception to the Open Container Ordinance to Tyron Dickens K9 Outreach Stop the Violence Car, Truck & Bike Show, and Concert at Chennault Park pursuant to Monroe City Code Sec. 12-231 D. (Open Container Ordinance) and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

(f.) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8970 granting an exception to the Open Container Ordinance to Isaac King Justa Cowboy Rodeo Association for the Bayou Black Open Rodeo and Tailgating pursuant to Monroe City Code Sec. 12-231 D. (Open Container Ordinance) and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

PROPOSED CONDEMNATIONS:

The following condemnations were considered:

(1.) 502 South 1st Street (D4) – Owner: Zelma Blakes Wyatt Notice to show cause was served. Photographic evidence was presented. Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, 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.

Mr. Tommy James, Code Enforcement, said this a dilapidated structure and they met with the property owner to pull permits, but none of that has been done. They are asking that the property be condemn and the owner be given 30 days to bring the structure up to code.

Mr. McFarland condemn the property giving the owner 30 days to bring the property up to code.

Ms. Zelma Blakes Wyatt said the property was gifted to her by her mother, Ms. Betty Blakes. At first, she didn't want the responsibility but after prayer, she decided to renovate it herself. She explained she has faced challenges with hiring workers and is also caring for her mother. She requested more than 30 days to fully restore the home.

Mr. McFarland advised Ms. Wyatt to get with Mr. James to get the permits pulled and the Council will work with her if she works with them.

(2.) 203 Grayling Lane (D4) – Owner: Roy and Theresa Cox Notice to show cause was served. Photographic evidence was presented. There was no one present. Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, 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. Harvey leaves the Council meeting at 7:21 pm)

Mr. James said this is an open dilapidated structure and the rear almost collapsed. They are asking that the property be condemned giving the owner 30 days to bring it into compliance.

Mr. McFarland said he has received a lot of phone calls about this property. He motion to condemn property giving the owner 30 days to bring the property into compliance.

(3.) Upon motion of Ms. Woods, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8970 amending the order of condemnation for 4103 Beale Street and further providing with respect thereto.

Mr. Creekbaum explained this amendment concerns the January 2023 condemnation order for 4103 Beale Street. The Resolution would grant the owner an additional six months to complete the work and bring the property into compliance. He said it is his understanding because the City began the actual demolition process the City would have to be reimbursed for those cost.

(Mr. Harvey returned to Council meeting at 7:23 pm)

Mr. Lorenzo Kelly, 418 Oregon Trail, thanked the Council for the extra time to complete the work, apologized for the delays, and said he now understands the permit requirement and will obtain it to proceed.

Ms. Woods thanked Mr. Kelly for purchasing and improving property in District 3. She said she would discuss a few matters with him outside the meeting.

Mr. James stated he spoke with Mr. Kelly before the meeting and informed him about the permits.

Department of Administration:

(a.) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mr. Muhammad and unanimously approved to consider an Application by Above Average Promotion LLC dba Garden's Kitchen & Bar, 519/521 DeSiard Street, Monroe LA 71201 for New 2025 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.)

(b.) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8971 approving the Ratification & Assignment of Water Purchase Contract, Estoppel Agreement & Release, between the City of Monroe, Town of Sterlington, and Magnolia Water Utility Operating Company, LLC. (There were no public comments.)

Mayor's Office:

(a.) Upon motion of Ms. Woods, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8972 authorizing a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement with Red, White, and Blue Airshow Inc. and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Department of Public Works:

(a.) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8973 adopting a Title VI Program for the Monroe Transit System. (There were no public comments.)

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS & ORDINANCES:

(a.) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Ms. Woods and approved to Introduce an Ordinance establishing time limits for certain mayoral appointments. (Mr. Harvey & Mrs. Ezernack Nay) (There were no public comments.)

Mrs. Ezernack wanted to know what would happen if in fact those time limits weren't met.

Mr. Creekbaum said if there is validly imposed mandatory duty and someone fails to comply the traditional remedy at law it would be mandamus. He said that is with cases dealing with public officials and non-discretionary duties.

Mr. Muhammad said the Ordinance is meant to address the timeframe, as the Civil Service rules don't specify what happens if the Mayor doesn't appoint someone. He explained it serves as a gentle reminder for the Mayor to present another candidate.

Mr. Creekbaum said the process occurs 90 days after the vacancy and every 30 days thereafter if confirmation is denied.

(b.) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance amending Sections 30.5-1 (Definitions) and 30.5-9 (Where Smoking Not

Regulated) of the City of Monroe Code and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Mr. Creekbaum noted that the version of the Ordinance in the public packet has been revised and submitted to the City Council. The revisions removed references to a cigar bar and hookah lounge, and to it being a bar, to better align with the Ordinance's intent. He also highlighted that the Ordinance's age limit was 18, but since the State raised the smoking age to 21, he recommended the Council introduce the revised Ordinance with the age updated to 21 to comply with State law.

Mr. Muhammad motion to introduce the revised Ordinance seconded by Mr. Harvey.

Ms. Woods wanted clarification that it is going from a bar to a lounge.

Mr. Creekbaum explained that the Ordinance's intent is to ensure any establishment with a smoking exception is primarily for smoking, not alcohol. While incidental alcohol sales are allowed, a business cannot bypass the no-smoking ban by operating mainly as a bar.

(c.) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Ms. Woods and approved to Introduce an Ordinance adopting the actual and Adjusted Millage Rate(s) and providing for the Levying of Special and General Taxes for the City of Monroe for the year 2025 and further providing with respect thereto. (Mr. Harvey & Mrs. Ezernack Nay) (There were no public comments.)

Mr. Harvey said he struggles with the roll forward when the Council didn't take advantage of the opportunity to privatize garbage and save a million dollars. He said now the Council is asking people to pay almost another \$400,000 in property taxes and it just doesn't align with him.

Mr. Muhammad said he doesn't think this is asking the property owners to pay more taxes. He wanted to know if they are just rolling the millage forward.

Mr. Creekbaum explained that this is not a roll forward. The Council would be adopting rates at the maximum adjusted millage rate. Currently, the City's general fund rate is below the maximum and this Ordinance would raise it to the maximum. A roll forward, by contrast, involves restoring rates that were already at the maximum back to the originally voter-approved rate, which requires special procedures.

Mr. Muhammad wanted to know how much would it generate.

Mr. Dan Richards stated the only one that is below the maximum is the general funds that would generate \$890,000.

Mr. Muhammad said affecting property tax is something new he is hearing.

Mr. Richard said they are increasing the millage by 1.81 mills.

Mr. Muhammad said that is not how it was explained to him. He said it was explained to him that they could roll forward and there was a second part of this that would help generate another \$200,000. He said from his understanding the second part was going to require a 2/3 vote, and he said if not they can roll forward the City revenues without affecting taxes would be \$800,000.

Mr. Creekbaum noted any increase would affect taxes that is where the \$800,000 is generated.

Mrs. Ezernack stated that higher property taxes affect not only homeowners but also apartment and business owners, ultimately impacting tenants through higher rent. She emphasized the widespread burden on the community and said any millage or tax increase should be voted on by the citizens. She urged the City to further reduce internal spending rather than shift the financial burden onto taxpayers.

Mr. McFarland wanted a better understanding that the millage was already voted on by the people and the City elected not to take it to the max.

Mr. Creekbaum explained that millages were originally set to generate a specific amount of revenue. As property values rise, the City can lower the tax rate and still collect the same revenue. Each year, the assessor provides an "adjusted maximum" rate to maintain that revenue. He noted the City has been charging below this maximum for the general fund, though he's unsure how long.

Mr. Harvey stated there are two tiers, leaving it like the version it is today, and collect the same amount of money. He said, as property value increases, it generates \$1 million, just to use a round number, and property value goes up. Then, that number can go down, and they still collect a million dollars.

Mr. McFarland reiterated, if the millage was voted on years ago, did Monroe City decide not to collect what they could have been collecting? He noted they charged less, but the citizens of Monroe voted for more in order to have more services, which is what it sounds like to him. He said now people are going to look at the Council if they vote this up, like it is a new tax, and it's not. He further noted previous leadership had elected not to collect what the people had voted on years ago, because a standard had been set. He said he has to bring to the next Council meeting the issue concerning trash and garbage, which either they will get rid of, or go in the hole. He said either they are going to get rid of it and get an outside company, but he is hearing from his constituents they don't want that, because they won't get the same service.

Mr. Harvey said they are, and there are two ways to look at it. For example, they can tax the property 1%, and it will generate 10 million dollars a year. He stated the property value keeps going up, and they can now collect 11 million dollars a year. He said the voters told the Council that they would give 10 million dollars a year, but technically the City can take 11 million dollars a year. He said they can decide which one was violated: to not take the money that they were supposed to, or, when asked for 10 million dollars now after a couple of years, they have taken 13 or 14 million dollars. He said they didn't take the money they were supposed to, and, as someone who has voted on these before, that is mischaracterizing it in his opinion. He said they didn't take the maximum allowable and ultimately generates a tax increase by doing that, and that is the way he looks at it.

Mrs. Ezernack explained that during reassessment, even if the City lowers the millage rate, property owners may still pay more if their property's value has increased. The City, however, maintains the roll forward so that in some cases, owners would pay the same amount despite value changes.

Mr. McFarland noted this is for introduction on tonight and he asked Mr. Creekbaum to send a good summary of when this was voted in by the citizens.

Mrs. Ezernack wanted to know if it fails do the City go with what they have already.

Mr. Creekbaum said he would have to do further research to not give an incomplete answer.

(Mayor Ellis leaves City Council meeting at 8:00 pm)

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

The Chairman Open Public Hearing and Seeing no one coming forward the Hearing was closed

(a.) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved Ordinance No. 12,268 authorizing the City of Monroe to take corporeal possession of and sell to Alvin McClain and Natasha McClain, all rights, title, and interest that the City may have acquired to Lot 21, Sq. 52, Ouachita Cotton Mills 2nd Addition, Ouachita Parish, 1301 Florida St., Monroe, La by adjudication at tax sale dated July 31, 2003, and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

The Chairman Open Public Hearing and Seeing no one coming forward the Hearing was closed

(b.) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Ordinance No. 12,269 declaring certain movable property as surplus and authorizing its sale through an online public auction conducted by 32 Auctions and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Citizen's Participation:

1. Mr. Curtis Garth, 2300 Georgia Street, stated his home was damaged almost beyond repair by a tree owned by the City of Monroe. He said he really need the City to repair his own and he has tried to get on the agenda about his repairs.

Mr. McFarland asked that Mr. Creekbaum send a summary of the matter concerning Mr. Garth's repairs to all Councilmembers.

Mr. Creekbaum stated he would get with Mr. Garth after the meeting.

2. Mr. Robert E. Johnson, 2608 Cooley Street, said it is sad that Council is discussing something that should have been done in an executive meeting. He said the three Councilmembers aren't bad because they asking questions. He said he mentioned to the Mayor that Mr. Brandon Creekbaum is not giving him fair information just like he is not giving the Council fair information. He suggested the Council keep doing what they are doing because one thing he knows there is a God that sits high and looks low, and it is time to cut the foolishness out and move forward with the city.

3. Mr. Clifton Lewis, 115 Memorial Drive, said he previously addressed the Council in November of 2024 regarding 1708 Bernstein Park Drive. He explained the City had given them a letter about purchasing the property frontage for a three-lane entrance to Bernstein Park. After meeting with the Assistant City Attorney and following up several times in May, he came today because he is still waiting on the letter outlining what the City will do regarding needed repairs at the property.

Mr. Creekbaum noted that he approved the letter and said that if it hasn't been sent, he will deal with it in his office.

4. Mr. Johnnie Thomas, 414 South 8th Street, expressed frustration over the City's uncleanliness, tall grass, and poor appearance. She said despite city trucks passing daily, there is a difference between having a job and doing a job and urged the City to better manage cleanliness while also encouraging residents to put out trash on time.

5. Mr. Kenya Robinson, Northeast Louisiana Black Chamber of Commerce, announced their annual Back-to-School Drive will be held this Saturday from 10:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Monroe Civic Center Arena. They expect to serve 500 children with backpacks, school supplies, and resources for students and parents. She invited Councilmembers to attend, fellowship, and take photos with the children, thanked the Council for its financial support, and noted the event is free and open to the community.

6. Ms. Therese Caissie, 502 Cole Avenue, thanked the Council for their service, expressed appreciation for all members, and said she is praying for unity in Monroe and an end to division.

There being no further business to come before the council, the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 8:19 p.m.

Mr. Rodney McFarland I
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.