

City Hall, Monroe, Louisiana
August 26, 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 Mr. Muhammad or his designee.

The Invocation was led by Ouachita Parish Police Juror Mr. Michael Thompson.

PRELIMINARY AGENDA MATTERS: Pennington Biomedical Research Center - Ms. Lauren Goddard, GRE AUX Healthy, explained that the initiative partners with the State of Louisiana to provide tools and resources for preventing and treating childhood obesity. Louisiana has a 23.15% obesity rate among children ages 6–17, ranking third highest in the nation. As part of their vision, they are introducing the Healthy Moves bus to bring free resources to Louisiana residents. They also run the Pennington Generation study, aiming to enroll 1,500 families statewide for health screenings and behavior data. This week, they will be at the Ouachita Parish Library (10–1 p.m.) and at a ULM tailgate event at the ACE lot. Their resources are designed for healthcare providers, educators, families, and community members. More information is available at greauxhealthy.org.

COMMUNICATIONS & SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS:

(1.) Mr. Harvey had no announcements.

(2.) Mrs. Ezernack welcomed everyone to the meeting and she recognized former Councilwoman Kay Katz, noting her 12 years of service in the Louisiana Legislature and expressing appreciation for her contributions.

(3.) Ms. Woods acknowledged former Councilman Kenneth Wilson, and thanked Police Juror Michael Thompson for the prayer. She congratulated Coach DeeDee Massey winning the bid for the 2026 USATF Southern Association Junior Olympics for Monroe (June 18–21, 2026). She also announced a series of community meetings to discuss the City's trash and garbage services and whether to contract them out or keep them in-house. The meetings are scheduled for August 28th at Emily P. Robinson, September 2nd at Powell Avenue Community Center, and September 4th at Harvey Benoit, all from 6:00–7:30 p.m. and encouraged residents to attend.

(4.) Mr. Muhammad thanked Mr. Thompson for the heartfelt prayer and noted that tonight's agenda is focused on infrastructure projects for all citizens of Monroe. He announced an AT&T laptop giveaway at Harvey Benoit (tomorrow, 4–6 p.m.) and a community meeting on trash and garbage services on September 4th, 6–7:30 p.m. He highlighted the upcoming Wossman vs. Carroll football jamboree and a lot more football events. Lastly, he acknowledged that the city has had only one homicide this summer, which he said deserves applause.

(5.) Mayor Friday Ellis noted a really productive and busy week engaging with the business community and residents. He said the Monroe Chamber Government Advocacy Council constantly meet to talk about ways to partner with the City and help with infrastructure issues. He explained the plans behind the Candy Co. Auction to develop it into a mixed-use development. He said the items sold will go as matching funds to the half-million-dollar grant to restore the Cooley House. He highlighted the Coffee and Convos with the Chamber of Commerce and the Luncheon with Senator Kennedy this pass week. He noted to save the date for The River Market September 13, 2025, 9 a.m. until 1 p.m., the Mayor's Cup Charity Golf Tournament September 19th, and Rollin' on the Riverfront October 25th.

(6.) Mr. McFarland noted the Council prefers to gather feedback at community meetings before the item is brought to City Council meeting concerning trash and garbage. He said the Mayor and city staff will attend to answer questions.

Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, and seconded by Ms. Ezernack, and the minutes of the Legal and Regular session of August 12, 2025, and the Legal and Special Session August 4, 2025, were approved. (There were no public comments.)

Proposed Condemnations: 407 Carlton Ave. (D4) – Owner: S Birds, LLC c/o C. Palmer Jarrell and Allison Jarrell, Reg. Agent. 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. Tommy James, Code Enforcement Officer, stated this is an open dilapidated structure and it's collapsed on the left side. They are asking that the property be condemned giving the owner 30 days to bring it into compliance.

Mr. McFarland motion to condemn the property, giving the property owner 30 days to bring the property up to code. If not move forward with condemning the structure.

RESOLUTIONS AND MINUTE ENTRIES:

Council

(a.) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8975 appointing John J. Miller to the Monroe Board of Adjustment. (There were no public comments.)

(b.) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8976 appointing Valandria LaTrice Mays to the Monroe Board of Adjustment. (There were no public comments.)

(c.) Upon motion of Ms. Woods, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8977 appointing Antonio D. Tims to the Interstate 20 Economic Development Corporation and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

(d.) Upon motion of Ms. Woods, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8978 granting an exception to the Open Container Ordinance to the Twin City Art Foundation for an Exhibition Reception for Clifford Tresner: Swimming in the Sky at the Masur Museum of Art pursuant to Monroe City Code Sec. (There were no public comments.)

(e.) Upon motion of Ms. Woods, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8979 granting an exception to the Open Container Ordinance to the Twin City Art Foundation (PARTY 318) at the Masur Museum of Art 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:

(a.) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to Consider request from the Purchasing Division for authorization to advertise for bids for the Georgia Street Pump Station Project. The estimate for the Georgia Station Project is \$6,941,490.00, Alternate No. 1 - \$1,407,500.00, and Alternate No. 2 \$1,640,000.00. The DBE Goal is 15.12%. (There were no public comments.)

Mr. Muhammad said this will alleviate the flooding problem and get the ball rolling for a pump station in that area for heavy rain.

Mayor Ellis thanked Mr. McCallister and his team for their excellent work, noting the complexities of federal funding, including changing notices, requirements, and environmental considerations, and thanked all involved for making the project possible.

Mr. Muhammad noted the 15% DBE goal should be commended as well.

(b.) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to Consider request from the Purchasing Division for authorization to advertise for bids for the Kansas Lane-Garrett Road & I-20 Improvements MALSR Relocation Only Project is \$248,650. The DBE goal is 6.55%. (There were no public comments.)

(c.) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved to Consider request from the Purchasing Division for authorization to advertise for bids for the Texas Ave. LS Sewer Force Main Repairs Project. The estimate for the Texas Ave. LS Sewer Force Main Repairs Project is \$1,000,000.00. The DBE goal is 16.67%. (There were no public comments.)

(d.) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8980 accepting the bid of Hemphill Construction Co. Inc. for the WPCC VTSH pumps #1 & 2 Replacement Project and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Legal Department:

(a.) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8981 authorizing the City of Monroe to Settle Opioid Epidemic Claims with certain manufacturer defendants and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Mr. Muhammad wanted to know how long the City has been dealing with this.

Mr. Creekbaum noted he thinks about three and a half or four years.

(b.) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8982 authorizing the City of Monroe to Settle Opioid Epidemic Claims with Purdue Pharma, L.P. and the Sackler Family and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Engineering Services:

(a.) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8983 approving Amendment No. 2 to Task Order No. 14 with CSRS, LLC, for the Young's Bayou Channel Enhancement Project. (There were no public comments.)

Mrs. Ezernack thanked Mr. McCallister for bringing the Council all the information.

(b.) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8984 approving Task Order 6 between the City of Monroe and Volkert, Inc the Pine St. Pump Gates Improvements Project. (There were no public comments.)

Mr. Muhammad said this is another pump at Pine Street that he is pleased to support.

(c.) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8985 authorizing the City of Monroe to enter into a cooperative Endeavor Agreement between the City of Monroe and the State of Louisiana Department of Transportation & Development for the H.015248, LA 15 & US 165-Business Repairs Project and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

(d.) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8986 approving Amendment No. 2 to the Professional Services Agreement with Atakapa Services, LLC for the City-Wide Storm Drainage and Sanitary Sewer Cleaning Project. (There were no public comments.)

(e.) Upon motion of Ms. Woods, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8987 approving Amendment No. 3 to Task order No. 15 with CSRS, LLC for the DeSiard Street Improvements (S. Grand St. to N. 6th St.) Project. (There were no public comments.)

(f.) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack, seconded by Mr. Muhammad and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8988 approving Task Order No. 21-19 with Lazenby & Associates, Inc. for the Civic Center Parking Lot Improvements Project. (There were no public comments.)

(g.) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack, seconded by Mr. Muhammad and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8989 approving Task Order No. 21-20 with Lazenby & Associates, Inc. for BJ

Washington Community Center (Robert Drive) Roadway, Lighting, and Drainage Project. (There were no public comments.)

Mr. Muhammad noted this is in the BJ Washington area and hopefully they can get that old concession stand torn down and get some improvement in that area.

Ms. Woods informed the Council staff the Facebook livestream was down. She thanked everyone that was involved with the DBE goals increase.

(Facebook livestream, which had experienced a temporary disruption, was restored and resumed normal operation.)

(h.) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8990 approving a Master Services Agreement with CSRS, LLC to provide engineering, surveying, and other related professional services. (There were no public comments.)

(i.) Upon motion Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8991 approving Amendment No. 1 to Task Order No. 18 with CSRS, LLC, for the Oregon Trail Protective Levee Project. (There were no public comments.)

(j.) Upon motion Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8992 approving Closeout Change Order No. Two (2) for the Texas Standifer Trunkline Repairs Project. (There were no public comments.)

Mr. Muhammad wanted to know what all went into Phase 1 and what Phase 2 would look like.

Mr. McCallister reported on the Texas/Standifer Trunk Line Repairs, noting Phase 1 covered over 9,000 linear feet and Phase 2 over 5,000 linear feet—nearly 3 miles of sewer force main. Phase 1 involved numerous point repairs and full slip lining, resulting in over \$400,000 in savings. Phase 2 was initially a \$7 million project but was reduced to under \$3 million through point repairs and limited slip lining. He said the City plans to complete full slip lining in the future.

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS & ORDINANCES:

(a.) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance approving an application by Katherine Zimmerman to rezone certain property (2.128 acres), amending the zoning map for the City of Monroe and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Mr. Creekbaum stated that the Planning Commission approved the request without conditions, and the Council has the same authority. Since then, additional affected property owners were identified, and the proposed ordinance includes a condition requiring their consent. Planning and Zoning is working to obtain this consent, and the ordinance allows the applicant 30 days to secure it, with extra time beyond the next meeting if needed.

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. Muhammad, seconded by Ms. Woods and approved Ordinance No. 12,270 establishing time limits for certain mayoral appointments. (Mr. Harvey & Mrs. Ezernack nay)

Mr. Harvey stated the Council has already established sufficient oversight of the Mayor's appointments and can set whatever criteria they choose when reviewing them.

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 approved Ordinance No. 12,271 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. (Mrs. Ezernack nay) (There were no public comments.)

Mrs. Ezernack spoke against the final adoption, noting she was on the Council when the non-smoking ordinance was adopted. She said people were concerned that if Monroe and West Monroe did it alone, those who wanted to smoke would go to other communities and spend their money. She said she feels that once they open the door to amend it, others will come with requests for exceptions, such as smoking in restaurants.

Ms. Woods wanted Mr. Creekbaum explained the Ordinance in its entirety.

Mr. Creekbaum explained that the ordinance would create an exception to the City's no-smoking rule, allowing smoking in cigar or hookah lounges where at least 60% of sales are from those products. He noted safeguards are included, such as employee protections and facility ventilation requirements.

Mrs. Ezernack wanted to know who is going to keep up with the sales.

Mr. Creekbaum stated he believes they discussed that it would be Tax & Revenue.

Before moving to the next item on the agenda, the Chairman stated the Council will entertain a motion to amend the millage back to the original millage of last year at 10.18 mills.

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

(c.) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved Ordinance No. 12,272 as amended 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. (There were no public comments.)

Citizen's Participation:

(1.) Coach DeeDee Massey, 1900 Hickory Street, stated on Saturday she won a bid to host a track meet at ULM with over 5,000 athletes from June 18 -21, 2026.

(2.) Ms. Harvetta Reddix, 376 Joe White Road, thanked the Council and Mayor Ellis for hearing her concerns. A retired educator and founder of Lovey's Mobile tutoring nonprofit, she emphasized the importance of adults modeling positive behavior for children, citing the poem "Children Learn What They Live". She encouraged the Council to work together as examples and leaders for youth, providing stability and security.

(3.) Ms. Connie Adams, 2802 Magellan Place, said AT&T contractors left sinkholes in some neighbors' yards after installing fiber optic cables. She asked who she should contact to have the issue addressed and fixed.

Mayor Ellis asked Mr. Morgan McCallister to meet with Ms. Adams to address the issue.

(4.) Mr. Tyrone Dickens, 3004 Dick Taylor Street, extended an invitation to everyone for the Stop the Violent Event this weekend at Chennault Park.

(5.) Mr. Robert E. Johnson, 2608 Cooley Street, said he was elected Union President for City of Monroe Local No. 2388 and raised prior concerns about City Attorney Brandon Creekbaum.

(6.) Mr. Brain Drayton, Vice-President Local 2388, expressed an issue with Mr. Creekbaum and Chief Jimmie Bryant reporting to Council 17.

(7.) Ms. Kenya Roberson, on behalf of the Northeast Louisiana Chamber of Commerce, Renaissance Movement Committee, and Omega Fraternity, thanked the Council and Mayor for supporting their back-to-school drive. She thanked the Civic Center employees for their efforts, and she said she appreciated the Council's participation, noting it showed they care and can come together despite disagreements.

There being no further business to come before the council, the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 7:27 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