

City Hall, Monroe, Louisiana  
September 9, 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 Dr. Ruth Collins-Brown of St. Jude Baptist Church of Monroe

PRELIMINARY AGENDA MATTER: Mayor's Office – Addon: Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved to add the following four alcohol license to the agenda. Consider an Application by Correct Commissary LLC dba CorrCom, 4201 Bon Aire Drive, Monroe LA 71203 for a 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 Occupancy Cleared) – New Owner. (Department of Administration) (There were no public comments.)

Consider an Application by Correct Commissary LLC dba CorrCom, 500 Warhawk Way, Monroe LA 71203 for a 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 Occupancy Cleared) – New Owner.

Consider an Application by Correct Commissary LLC dba CorrCom, 308 Warhawk Way, Monroe LA 71203 for a 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 Occupancy Cleared) – New Owner.

Consider an Application by Correct Commissary LLC dba CorrCom, 322 Warhawk Way, Monroe LA 71203 for a 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 Occupancy Cleared) – New Owner.

Mr. Brandon Creekbaum, City Attorney, stated ULM has hired a new concessionaire to do the concessions for their events. He said they completed their alcohol application after the agenda deadline on Friday and would like to move forward with getting their license.

Mr. McFarland stated if it is an urgent he has no issue adding it to the agenda, but it takes a unanimous vote.

(Mrs. Ezernack motion to add four items to the agenda, seconded by Mr. Harvey)

Ms. Woods stated that if the Council is asked to add an item, she needs to understand the reason and the urgency behind it. She noted that if an event involves alcohol, someone should be present to inform the Council. Simply adding an item because it was not submitted on time does not resonate well with her. She then asked Mr. Tim Lewis if he knew the reason for the urgency.

Mr. Tim Lewis, Tax & Revenue Director, explained that Tax & Revenue handles alcohol licenses but he cannot speak to why this one was late. A new catering company took over, submitting paperwork after the deadline, prompting a late addition request. Normally, two occupational license specialists handle the process, and after Police Department approval, then it is sent to Ms. Carolus Riley to add on.

Mrs. Ezernack stated this is in her district and they do have a new administration and president at ULM. She said the Council don't want to sabotage the university from being able to have events

that may be already planned. She said it is unusual circumstances because who tells them they need to be here.

Mr. Lewis said the occupational license specialist do encourage a representative for each alcohol license to be here and they are notified when they would be on the agenda.

Mr. McFarland said it is problematic they don't have the individual here to speak to the Council. He said they have to come to the meeting and answer questions; it is not business as usual.

Mr. Harvey added about a month ago the Council had a very similar instance where someone request to add an alcohol license. He wanted to know has every other requirement been satisfied.

Mr. Lewis said yes, it is his understanding the background checks were passed, no issue with the distance report, and they were an existing license with no sales tax delinquency.

Mr. Harvey said, in a similar situation, the Chairman posed to him, since it was in his district, if he was okay with it, and he thinks Mrs. Ezernack should be afforded the same courtesy

Mr. McFarland noted he has spoken with Mr. Creekbaum about changing Council rules to allow the Chairman, once the first agenda is posted, to add items up to 24 hours before the meeting. He stated that if he had that authority, the item in question would have been included on the agenda.

Mrs. Ezernack wanted to know if Mr. Lewis could call whoever made the application and have them come to the meeting.

Mr. Lewis said he can try to reach out to his occupational license specialist.

Mrs. Ezernack said this is going to sink a lot of events between now and the end of the month. She said they are supposed to be supporting the university they need to decide if they are going to support or not.

Ms. Woods stated this is her absolute last time voting for something to be added to the agenda.

(The Chairman noted the motion has been passed to add the item to the agenda.)

Rules of the Day: In the Council Chambers, before the Council vote on any action item the public will have an opportunity to make comments and will have three minutes. Once the clock sounds the Council ask that they kindly take a seat. The Chairman ask that the Council not interrupt the ones that are at the podium unless they are relinquishing the reminder of their 3 minutes. They cannot ask additional questions, and they can't ask for additional time. At citizen's participation at the end of the agenda each citizen will have an to express themselves for 3 minutes. The Chairman ask that no one interrupt the citizen. Afterwards the Council will be able to deliberate or give some directions. The only ones that have more than 3 minutes is the Council.

Mayor's Veto: Ms. Carolus Riley, Council Clerk, read into the minutes the Mayor vetoed Ordinance No. 12,270 and returned it to the Council on September 2, at 1:27 pm. The Mayor's veto, along with his veto message, was delivered to the Council on September 2, at 1:45 pm. The veto and veto message for the Ordinance will be maintained in the Council records.

Mr. McFarland said Ordinance 12,270 dealt with mayoral appointments to be made in a timely manner if an appointee is rejected. He noted the Fire Chief replacement took seven months, which led to the ordinance, but it has since been vetoed. He added that while the Mayor can veto ordinances, he cannot veto resolutions.

#### COMMUNICATIONS & SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS:

(1.) Mr. Harvey had no announcements.

(2.) Mrs. Ezernack welcomed everyone, and she thanked the Council for the addon item for further discussion.

(3.) Ms. Woods said good evening and thank everyone for coming.

(4.) Mr. Muhammad stated they had a successful laptop giveaway at Benoit earlier this month. He said there is a lot speeding in the neighborhoods, and they are asking if you see speeding in the neighborhood report it. Next, he stated Wossman Homecoming is coming up September 19<sup>th</sup> and

they are asking that everyone be safe and have fun. Lastly, he said the they are 110 days with only one homicide.

(5.) Mayor Ellis expressed his condolences to the family of Mr. Michael Castor. He said he was a wonderful presence in the community and for the youth of this city. He thanked AT&T for the laptop donations to the community and long term partnership with the City. On another note, he presented a proclamation to Mr. Roy Heatherly who will be retiring in December 2025 from being the President of the Monroe Chamber of Commerce. Lastly, the Mayor of Sterlington and District C Vice President of LMA would like to give a welcome.

Mr. Matt Talbert, Mayor of Sterlington, highlighted the many resources the LMA offers municipalities and said he is willing to assist if needed. He expressed excitement about the upcoming 100th LMA anniversary in Monroe next year, thanked the Council for the opportunity, and said he looks forward to working with them.

(6.) Mr. McFarland said the Council have some hot topics they will be talking on tonight and the Council will vote on these issues to try and move the city forward. He said a few things have happened since the last Council meeting and they are going to continue to try and work together.

Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack, the minutes of the Legal and Regular Session of August 26, 2025, were unanimously approved.(There were no public comments.)

#### PROPOSED CONDEMNATIONS:

The following condemnation was considered:

1. 1603 South 12<sup>th</sup> Street (D4) – Owner: Charlon Brown Perkins. Notice to show cause was served. Photographic evidence was presented. 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 he met with the property owners today and they have intentions on remodeling the property. They are asking that the property be condemn giving the owner 30 days to pull permits and bring the structure up to compliance.

Mr. McFarland motion to condemn the property giving the property owner 30 days to bring the property into compliance, pull permits, or make modifications to the structure.

Ms. Woods wanted clarification on the 6 month process.

Mr. Creekbaum stated when pulling the permit that it's their authority to start work, and the permit remains active during the course of the work, but it expires after a six month period.

The following condemnation was removed:

Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved to remove 2916 Jackson Street (D5) (There were no public comments.)

Mr. James noted he spoke with the property owner, and the issue has been addressed.

#### RESOLUTIONS AND MINUTE ENTRIES:

Council:

(a.) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Ms. Woods and approved Resolution No. 8993 requesting the Mayor abide by the Louisiana Supreme Court's Ruling in Monroe Municipal Fire and Police Civil Service Board v. Reginald Brown and the City of Monroe. (Mr. Harvey & Mrs. Ezernack nay) (There were no public comments.)

Mr. Muhammad noted he wrote a letter asking the Mayor to reinstate Mr. Brown. He said the City has spent nearly half a million dollars on this and need to get rid of it.

Ms. Woods congratulated Mr. Brown on being victorious, noting the situation was likely politically motivated. However, she is not happy, noting the position he is in right now is demeaning. She further stated that moving from Chief of Police to a jailer role undermines his service and authority.

Mr. Harvey stated he respects the Supreme Court ruling and agrees the City must comply. He feels the Resolution is more about control than compliance and believes it may not serve the City's best interests to dictate legal strategy.

Mrs. Ezernack echoed Mr. Harvey's comments and said she could not support it as presented.

Mr. McFarland criticized the treatment of Reginald Brown, calling it humiliating that after a Louisiana Supreme Court ruling, a former Chief of Police with a master's degree was reassigned as a jailer without a gun at OCC. He emphasized that Council meetings are led by the Council, not the Mayor, and questioned the Mayor's role in continuing appeals. He said \$256,840.96 has been spent fighting and losing the case and Mr. Brown had to pay \$15,000 for legal representation due to another lawsuit. He stressed that violating a resolution constitutes malfeasance in office.

(b.) Upon motion of Mr. Muhamamad, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8994 authorizing the renewal of a Professional Services Agreement with Picard Group, L.L.C. (There were no public comments.)

(c.) Upon motion of Mr. Muhamamad, seconded by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8995 granting an exception to the Open Container Ordinance to the Lotus Club for an October Festival pursuant to Monroe City Code Sec. 12-231D (Open Container Ordinance) and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Mayor Office:

(a.) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8996 authorizing a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement with Northeast Louisiana Chamber of Commerce.

Ms. Kenya Roberson, Northeast Louisiana Chamber of Commerce, expressed gratitude to the Council and Mayor for their leadership and support. She highlighted how the City's partnership has fostered business roundtables for open dialogue, local government meetups for timely information, and corporate connect events that build relationships leading to contracts and mentorships. She noted targeted trainings have helped local firms earn essential certifications, strengthening their ability to compete. She added that over 500 children received school supplies through their efforts. She concluded that while more work remains, they are moving toward a stronger, more inclusive local economy and thanked the Council for standing with them.

The Council commended Ms. Roberson and her board for all their hard work.

(b.) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8997 authorizing a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement with the Monroe Chamber of Commerce, Inc.

Mr. Roy Heatherly, President, thanked the Chamber for supporting Ms. Roberson and her group that do an amazing job. He thanked the Mayor and the Council for their support and the great relationship over the years.

(c.) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8998 authorizing a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement with the Cooley House Foundation. (There were no public comments.)

(d.) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack, seconded by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to Consider an application by Correct Commissary LLC dba CorrCom, 4201 Bon Aire Drive, Monroe LA 71203, 500 Warhawk Way, Monroe LA 71203 308 Warhawk Way, Monroe LA 71203, and 322 Warhawk Way, Monroe LA 71203 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) – New Owner.

Mr. Kevin Sumrall, stated they entered into an agreement with ULM to provide concessions and they were kind of under a tight window because of the transition at ULM. He said the City has been very cooperative giving them their occupational license and now they are here for the liquor license. He further noted he would appreciate the Council's support

Mr. McFarland wanted to know if liquor was sold at the first game.

Mr. Sumrall said no sir; Aramark did the first game and that was the agreement.

Mr. McFarland wanted to know how the old company were able to sale liquor if they are no longer the tenant of concessions.

Mr. Sumrall noted they have a global license with two different contracts catering and food service at ULM, but there is concession at athletic events.

Mr. Creekbaum stated for clarification Aramark will maintain the existing license until it expires.

Mr. Sumrall said ULM visited with Aramark who would do it for the first game but only for that game. He said the next game coming would be the Homecoming game and they just want to get things in organized.

Department of Public Work:

(a.) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack failed to adopt a Resolution accepting the RFP response of and authorizing and contract with Waste Connections of Louisiana, Inc. for trash and garbage services. (Mrs. Ezernack, Ms. Woods, Mr. McFarland, and Mr. Muhammad Nay)

Mr. Robert Johnson, 2608 Cooly Street, said citizens at the public hearing opposed privatizing trash and garbage and preferred a fee increase instead. He criticized praising employees at breakfasts while cutting their jobs over financial losses. He warned that privatization would raise fees without public input and could leave 35 part-time workers unemployed while Council members keep their positions.

Mr. Don Hopkins, 2955 Chester Street, said this is a terrible move and in three months places will be worst. He said garbage and trash is a service and the Council could have amended the budget. He said in 5 to 7 years the city will look like Lake Providence.

Ms. Woods thanked attendees of the trash and garbage meetings. She said District 3 residents spoke clearly, and she heard and understands the assignment.

Mr. Muhammad noted he discovered the division of trash and garbage is suffering and don't have what they need to operate. He said Monroe is one of the only municipalities that handles garbage, and a lot of people have contracted it out. He said they have been running 1.2 million for several years and this can be kicked all the way to end of the road. He said they have not raised fees on garbage in 21 years, and the Council was bold enough to explore that idea. He said he can't support the RFP, and the Council will have to increase Public Works budget.

Mr. Harvey said he did get a chance to go to some of the community meetings and the feedback from the public was fairly significant. He said ultimately at the end of the day he doesn't care if they outsource it, but he advised a rate increase.

Mrs. Ezernack stated it is a financial problem, and she was hoping they would have a rate increase with this item as well.

Mr. McFarland said the previous Council there wouldn't have been any meetings just voted up or down. He said most constituents from Districts 3, 4, and 5 do not want a private community and prefer the City to continue services, even with fees. He noted Mr. Creekbaum explained it would take \$10-\$15 to make it work. While Mr. Harvey wanted the fees brought forward tonight, McFarland felt it was premature since water and sewer still needs to be addressed. He added that if fees are introduced, they should cover everything but for now he cannot support this item.

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

The Chairman opening the Public Hearing and seeing no one come forward the Public Hearing was closed:

(a.) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mr. Muhammad and unanimously approved Ordinance No. 12,273 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.)

Before moving to the next item on the agenda, The Chairman stated this is a part of the Council's agenda where the citizens will have an opportunity to speak to the Council within three minutes. He said he finds it very disrespectful if any Councilmember or the Mayor leave during citizen's participation. He said this is the time that the citizens will express themselves and it is disrespectful to walk out before they have that opportunity, but they have the right and privilege to walk out if they desire.

Citizen's Participation:

(1.) Jessica Wilson, 601 North 5th, attorney for Reginald Brown, stated she is still awaiting a response to a lawsuit they were forced to spend money defending, even after the Supreme Court reinstated Mr. Brown. She said she and Mr. Brown appreciate the Resolution but noted that Mr. Creekbaum still contacted her about a response, leading them to file one. She emphasized they will have to keep spending money unless the case is voluntarily dismissed.

Mr. McFarland noted the public need to know how things are being played out in the City of Monroe. To keep losing and spending money and causing Reggie Brown to spend more money that's what he is talking about. He said some think whatever the Administration do is right and it's not right.

Mr. Creekbaum clarified that Ms. Wilson had filed a court response before the Supreme Court ruling on his petition. He said he only requested a copy of what she had already filed, as she had not provided him one, and emphasized that the City of Monroe filed nothing after the Supreme Court's decision. He said the last suit filed seeks an adjudication as to whether back pay is required.

Mr. McFarland said no one advises the Mayor about spending, but he talks about the Council and what they are trying to do about Act 452, which is a double standard and hypocritical.

(2.) Mr. Christian Richards, 213 Burg Jones Lane, discussed his project at 301 Plum Street, noting it has been a long journey. He said despite offers to buy the property, he refuses to sell, explaining his focus is not on money but on his mission, purpose, and doing what is right.

(3.) Mr. Brian Drayton, 405 Filhiol Avenue, raised concerns about conditions at the City shop, a multimillion-dollar facility serving citizens. When asking the shop supervisor Antonio Riser for support and funding, nothing was done, and instead employees faced harassment and bullying. Complaints were made to Chief Jimmie Bryant, and when a meeting was held, the Mayor deferred entirely to Chief Bryant. Drayton questioned when the City would start treating employees fairly.

(4.) Mr. Robert E. Johnson, 2608 Cooley Street, expressed support for paying garbage workers a decent living wage, noting residents wouldn't mind rate increases if workers are fairly compensated. He urged the Mayor and Chairman to work together, criticizing the lack of unity during presentations. He expressed sadness over how Reginald Brown, a respected figure, was treated.

(5.) Ms. Kristen Pleasant spoke in support of Mr. Reggie Brown, noting his long and difficult battle. She expressed that it is deeply hurtful to see him demeaned by being placed at a jail. While not currently representing him, she strongly supports his case and urged the Mayor to do what is right. She said Mr. Brown deserves full back pay and hopes the lawsuit will be dismissed and he is properly compensated.

(6.) Mr. Curtis S. Garth, 2300 Georgia Street, stated that nearly a year has passed since a City of Monroe tree damaged his house due to the City's negligence. He questioned why the City has not repaired his home and asked the Council to investigate.

Mr. Creekbaum said he supplied Mr. Garth with a letter, and he shared that with the Chairman.

Mr. McFarland said he would like for Mr. Creekbaum to reassess and inform the Council.

There being no further business to come before the council, the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 8:04 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