

City Hall, Monroe, Louisiana  
September 23, 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: Mrs. Ezernack, Mr. McFarland, & Mr. Muhammad.

There was absent: Mr. Harvey & Ms. Woods

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

The Invocation was led by City Engineer Morgan McCallister.

Rules of the Day: The Chairman stated that, in order for anything to pass tonight, it must be by a unanimous vote. He said the public will have the opportunity to speak, if they desire, on each item. Each person will be allowed to speak only once for up to three minutes per agenda item and during citizens' participation. Any public comments must be germane to the agenda item being discussed.

Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack, the minutes of the Legal and Regular Session of September 9, 2025, were unanimously approved. (There were no public comments.)

#### PROPOSED CONDEMNATIONS:

The following condemnation was considered:

1. 808 Louise Anne Ave (D4) – Owner: Estate of Jay G. Todd c/o William Hughey. 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, stated this is an open dilapidated structure and has become a nuisance. They are asking that the property be condemned giving the owner 30 days to bring it into compliance.

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

#### RESOLUTIONS AND MINUTE ENTRIES:

##### Council:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8999 amending Section 1.3 of the Rules of Procedure of the Monroe City Council to provide additional authority for the preparation and publication of the agenda. (There were no public comments.)

(b) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved Resolution No. 9000 authorizing the City of Monroe to enter into a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement with the Northeast Louisiana Sickle Cell Anemia Foundation and further providing with respect thereto.

Ms. Candace Hunter, President, state on behalf of the Northeast Louisiana Sickle Cell Anemia Foundation thanked Councilman Muhammad, Councilman McFarland, and Councilwoman Woods for trusting their mission and wanting to support what they do every day for the sickle cell community.

(c) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved Resolution No. 9001 appointing Monyea Hampton to the Board of Commissioners for the Southside Economic Development District. (There were no public comments.)

Department of Administration:

(a.) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved Resolution No. 9002 rejecting the bid for the Water Systems Improvements – Thomas Avenue/Georgia Street Intersection Project. (There were no public comments.)

Mr. Morgan McCallister, City Engineer, noted that the cost estimate for this project was a little over \$600,000, and the bid received was 75% over that budget. He said the intersection has been down for a few months and they would rather make the repair and replace the roadway to remove the existing lines. He added that they did everything they could to limit the scope of the project as much as possible to the intersection area. He further noted that the goal of rejecting the bid is to be good stewards of the taxpayers' dollars.

Mr. McFarland noted that the bid that came in was too high, and a few of the regular contractors they usually send bids to decided not to submit their own bids but instead to team up with another bidder. Mr. Morgan stated that several bid holders ultimately decided to partner on the project. He explained that they cannot say why, but their internal estimate was \$677,000, while the bid received was nearly \$1.2 million. He clarified that public bid law requires an open bid and only a Louisiana license is needed to bid. Although many may have reviewed the project, there were only 7 or 8 plan holders and ultimately just one bid submitted.

(b) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved to Consider request from the Purchasing Division for permission to advertise for bids for the WPCC GOHSEP Statewide 5% Generators Initiative Project. The estimate for the WPCC GOHSEP Statewide 5% Generators Initiative Project is \$4,298,000.00. the dbc goal is 1.08%. (There were no public comments.)

(c) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved Resolution No. 9003 authorizing a Contract with NELA Roofing for the Monroe Business Hub Roof Repair Project and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

(d) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved Resolution No. 9004 authorizing an Agreement with the Travelers Indemnity Company of Connecticut for insurance for the Monroe Transit System. (There were no public comments.)

Mr. McFarland noted this came to the Council in the 9<sup>th</sup> hour and by now every department should know not to submit anything to them at the last minute. He said he asked Mr. Creekbaum when the policy actually expires, and it expires a few days from now that's problematic. He said he has issues with Travelers insurance, and he wanted to time to vet the concerns, but they all waited the minute to present this to the Council. He said he don't want the Transit system to be without insurance, but he pray and hope this don't happen again. He said him as Chair, and they bring something at the 9<sup>th</sup> hour again they will suffer the consequences of it not being on the agenda. He said it is problematic when he has to request something that should have been given to him in the beginning and in a timely fashion. He wanted why they waited to the last minute to present this to the Council.

Mr. McFarland noted that this came to the Council at the ninth hour, and by now every department should know not to submit anything at the last minute. He said he asked Mr. Creekbaum when the policy actually expires, and it expires in just a few days, which is problematic. He stated that he has issues with Travelers Insurance and wanted time to vet his concerns. He said he does not want the Transit system to be without insurance, but he prays and hopes this does not happen again. He stated that, as Chair, if something is brought to them at the ninth hour again, those responsible will face the consequences of it not being on the agenda. He emphasized that it is problematic when he has to request information that should have been provided from the beginning. He questioned why they waited until the last minute to bring this matter to the Council.

Mr. Peyton Pharr explained that in Louisiana's insurance marketplace, especially for municipal transit systems, there are only a few major carriers due to the high risk and state liability laws. He said First Transit's insurance program ended abruptly years ago, and Travelers stepped in at the last minute, becoming a strong, long-term partner for the City of Monroe. He said in his opinion they have done an exceptional job, noting that despite past losses, the premium increase is only 3%. He said they always seek multiple quotes, but no other carrier matches Travelers in coverage or cost. He added that they begin the renewal process 30 to 60 days in advance but sometimes can't provide quotes earlier due to market conditions.

Mr. McFarland said it is unacceptable to submit something to him just two weeks before it expires. He stated that he doesn't like having to request information that should be provided to him. He added that everything he needs to review should be included in the package and ready for him to review.

Mr. Pharr apologized for the miscommunication and explained that they have followed the same process for several years. He said now that he understands what the Council wants, they will meet and exceed those expectations. He requested a meeting before the Council meeting to ensure everyone understands their efforts, the renewal process, and their responsibilities, noting that they are sometimes at the mercy of the carriers.

Department of Public Works:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved Resolution No. 9005 approving the Monroe Regional Airport's Five-Year Airport Capital Improvement Plan and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

(b) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved Resolution No. 9006 authorizing the City of Monroe to enter into an agreement with the State of Louisiana Department of Transportation & Development for the Monroe Regional Airport Airfield Lighting rehabilitation – phase II Project (H.014713). (There were no public comments.)

(c) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack, seconded by Mr. Muhammad and unanimously approved Resolution No. 9007 authorizing the City of Monroe to enter into an agreement with the State of Louisiana Department of Transportation & Development for the Monroe Regional Airport Loading Bridge Replacement Project (H.016639). (There were no public comments.)

(d) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved Resolution No. 9008 authorizing the City of Monroe to enter into an agreement with the State of Louisiana Department of Transportation & Development for the Monroe Regional Airport Runway 14/32 and Runway 4/22 Intersection Rehabilitation Project (H.016633). (There were no public comments.)

(e) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved Resolution No. 9009 authorizing the City of Monroe to enter into an agreement with the State of Louisiana Department of Transportation & Development for the Monroe Regional Airport Runway 14/32 Extension – Phase III Project (H.014001). (There were no public comments.)

(f) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack, seconded by Mr. Muhammad and unanimously approved Resolution No. 9010 approving Modification No. 1 to Work Authorization No. 13 with Garver, LLC, for the MLU Drainage Improvements – Phase II Project. (There were no public comments.)

(g) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved Resolution No. 9011 approving Change Order No. 2 for the MLU Drainage Improvements – Phase II Project. (There were no public comments.)

(h) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved Resolution No. 9012 approving a modification to the FAA Reimbursable Agreement for the MLU Drainage Improvements – Phase II Project. (There were no public comments.)

Mrs. Ezernack thanked Mr. Charles Butcher, Airport Director, and his team for continuing to improve the airport and expend it.

Police Department:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved Resolution No. 9013 authorizing the City of Monroe to accept the donation of a boat and trailer from the Franklin Parish Police Jury and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Engineering Services:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved to Consider request from Edwin Perez at 401 Bres Avenue for a Major Conditional Use permit to operate a new restaurant located within the B-2 (Neighborhood Business District). The Comprehensive

Zoning Ordinance allows this as a Major Conditional Use in the B-2 (Neighborhood Business District). Major Conditional Uses are uses that require a second level of approval; therefore, this request comes before the City Council for their approval in addition to that of Planning Commission. (There were no public comments.)

(b) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack, seconded by Mr. Muhammad and unanimously approved Resolution No. 9014 approving Task Order 25SEW005 with Waggoner Engineering, Inc., for the WPCC Improvements – Fine Bar Screens Replacement Project. (There were no public comments.)

(c) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved Resolution No. 9015 approving Task Order No. 2 with Halff Associates, Inc., for the MLU Offsite Drainage Improvements Project. (There were no public comments.)

(d) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack, seconded by Mr. Muhammad and unanimously approved Resolution No. 9016 authorizing the City of Monroe to enter into Mitigation Credit Agreements for the Young’s Bayou Detention Pond Phase II Project. (There were no public comments.)

Mr. McCallister explained that the Resolution contained an incorrect purchase amount, originally stated as over \$2.1 million, but the correct total is \$1,483,016.50. He provided the Council with an updated purchase summary, noting that the earlier version included outdated figures. He added that the City will need to cover the cost of wetland mitigation credits upfront, but the expense is 100% reimbursable and should be back to the City within a couple of months.

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS & ORDINANCES:

(a) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack, seconded by Mr. Muhammad and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance authorizing the City of Monroe to take corporeal possession of and sell to Alvin McClain, all rights, title, and interest that the City may have acquired in Lot 4, Square 3, Layton’s Texas Ave. Addition, Ouachita Parish, 707 S. 14th St., District 5, Monroe, La, by Adjudication at Tax Sale dated June 3, 2020, and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

(b) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance amending Sections 37-21 (Definitions), 37-36 (Table 3:1; Residential Use Districts), Section 37-37 (Table 3:3; Commercial Use Districts), and Section 37-92 (Use Standards) of the Monroe City Code to establish sober living homes and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Mr. Muhammad stated this Ordinance will tighten up residential sober living and a lot of these homes are in the community.

Mrs. Ezernack noted this is for safety of residents and those in the sober living homes.

COMMUNICATIONS & SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS:

(1.) Mrs. Ezernack had no announcements.

(2.) Mr. Muhammad noted that Wossman celebrated homecoming last week, and Ouachita and Carroll are celebrating this week. He highlighted that there has been only one homicide in the past 127 days, and the current streak stands at 48 days within the City limits.

(3.) Mr. McFarland stated that he and Ms. Woods attended the Sickle Cell Anemia Foundation banquet, and it was a success. He said that, hopefully within the next few days, they will be able to make that presentation to the foundation. On another note, he asked Mr. Creekbaum to provide an update on the Fire Department investigation and wanted to know when he can expect a report.

Mr. Creekbaum noted he would get with Mrs. Yolanda Washington to check the dates.

Mr. Muhammad noted the free community disposal day is coming up on October 4<sup>th</sup> at the White Oak landfill.

Citizen’s Participation:

(1.) Dr. Ollibeth Reddix, 1201 Powell Avenue, presented to the City of Monroe a project called Pa-Pa’s Place which was once a busy and successful area. She said they want to make kind of food truck stop and give small businesses a chance to contribute to be self-sustaining and a place for

entertainment. She said it will be a soft opening this Saturday free of charge located at 917 DeSiard Street.

(2.) Bishop Hezekiah, of 287 Oak Street, expressed support for paying garbage workers \$15 an hour to keep their jobs. He said he voted for Mayor Ellis and once advocated for him, but now stands with Regional Brown, whom he believes was mistreated. He urged the Mayor to move Monroe forward and avoid division, stating he does not want a race war in the city and that everyone should live together. He also mentioned learning that a black City employee attacked Mr. McFarland, saying he would have filed a complaint and that Mr. McFarland shouldn't have been discouraged from doing so.

Mr. McFarland noted he won't let it happen again and that it is water under the bridge.

(3.) T.J. Stevenson, 1915 Adams Street, thanked Mr. McFarland for appointing Mr. Hampton, saying SEDD really needed that position filled, and she doesn't think they could've found anyone better. She said the attorney has a complaint of misconduct and malfeasance which needs to be addressed. She also talked about recent work done at the Dream Center and gave the Council photos of the building after it was turned back over to them, supposedly completed. The Mayor suggested making a punch list and taking it back to the contractor, with Council approval before releasing the check. They've already paid \$36,000 and just received another invoice for \$12,000. She was told they might need to get a lawyer to sue the contractor. She said they've spent money but haven't done anything meaningful for the Southside or the people, and she is begging for an Executive Session.

Mr. McFarland said according to everything he has looked at concerning SEDD the Council doesn't have privy to dictate of how to do that and they only have an appointee on that board. With the board legally the majority of the board can call a meeting.

Mr. Creekbaum noted that there are three ways to call a special meeting: the Chair can call a special meeting, the Vice-Chair can call one, or two-thirds of the members can call one. He further noted that, since the Vice-Chair position is currently vacant, there is no Vice-Chair to call a special meeting.

Mr. McFarland wanted to know if Mr. Creekbaum could advise the Chair that the first order of business will be to elect a Vice-Chair.

Mr. Creekbaum stated that, just as he doesn't disclose the advice he gives the City Council, he also won't discuss the advice he provides to the SEDD Board. He noted that his role is to offer legal guidance on the proper course of action.

(4.) Mr. Curtis Garth, 2300 Georgia Street, wanted an updated on the destruction of his home caused by the City. He said he is asking the City of Monroe and the Council to demolish his home and rebuild it.

(5.) Mr. Robert E. Johnson, 2608 Cooley Street, stated they have problems in the Union and voice his concern with the department head position being vacant. He further stated the Mayor need to follow the Home Rule Charter to appoint department heads not the governor.

Mr. McFarland informed Mr. Johnson that the Mayor submitted a letter of recommendation for the Director of Community Affairs after the agenda deadline, so it will be included on the next agenda.

There being no further business to come before the council, the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 7:10 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