

City Hall, Monroe, Louisiana
October 14, 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, Ms. Woods, Mr. McFarland, & Mr. Muhammad

There was absent: Mr. Harvey.

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

The Invocation was led by City Engineer Morgan McCallister.

Rules of the Day: Before the Council votes on any action item, the public may speak for three minutes. Once the bell sounds, speakers must be seated. During citizen participation, anyone who signed up may speak on any topic for three minutes. Comments on agenda items must be germane to the items.

Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack, seconded by Mr. Muhammad, the minutes of the Legal and Regular Session of September 23, 2025, were unanimously approved. (Ms. Woods abstain. She wasn't present at the last Council meeting) (There were no public comments.)

Proposed Condemnations:

1. 4105 Harvey Street (D3) – Owner: David and Rosa Lee Sledge. Photographic evidence was presented. There was no one present. Upon motion of Ms. Woods, seconded by Mr. McFarland and unanimously approved, the building was condemned, and the property owner given 30 days to bring the structure into compliance with the Code or demolish the Structure. (There were no public comments.)

Mr. Tommy James, Code Enforcement Officer, stated this is a dilapidated structure and they are asking the property owner be given 30 days to bring the structure into compliance.

Ms. Woods wanted to know if the property owner has been notified and served on this condemnation.

Mr. James said yes.

Ms. Woods motion to condemn the property giving the owner 30 days to bring into compliance.

2. 2409 Outlet Rd (D3) – Owner : Louise Hanspard, Et Photographic evidence was presented. There was no one present. Upon motion of Ms. Woods, seconded by Mr. McFarland and unanimously approved, the building was condemned, and the property owner given 30 days to bring the structure into compliance with the Code or demolish the Structure. (There were no public comments.)

Mr. James said this is an open dilapidated, unsafe structure and there is some illegal dumping on the property. They are asking that the property be condemned giving the owner 30 days and there has been no contact with the property owner.

Ms. Woods wanted to know if Mr. James has a timeline of when the cleanup for both property might occur.

Mr. James stated they still have to go through the process, and they have 30 days limit then they send the notice back out. He said they are looking at 60 to 90 days because after this process they still send them notifications again advising them that the property is condemned.

Mrs. Ezernack wanted to know the owner was served with the proper notice prior to this coming to the agenda.

Mr. James said yes, and they will be served after.

Ms. Woods motion to condemn the property giving the owner 30 days to bring into compliance.

3. 104 Carlton Ave (D4) – Owner : William and Gladys Porter c/o Treshan Breaux & Billy Porter Photographic evidence was presented. There was no one present. Upon motion of Mr. McFarland, seconded by Mr. Muhammad 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. (There were no public comments.)

Mr. James said this is dilapidated structure with some illegal dumping as well. 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 owner 30 days to bring the property up to code.

4. 3010 Halsell (D3) – Owner: Booker T. Community Outreach Project c/o Ester Gallow Estate – Chris Davis Photographic evidence was presented. There was no one present. Upon motion of Ms. Woods, seconded by Mr. Muhammad and unanimously approved, the building was condemned, and the property owner given 30 days to bring the structure into compliance with the Code or demolish the Structure. (There were no public comments.)

Mr. James said they have had a lot of complaints especially from a neighbor across the street about animals coming from this structure, but Public Works did go out and cut it. They are asking that this property be condemned giving the owner 30 days.

Ms. Woods stated this is one that she wish could be taken down before the timeframe because it has been there for a while. She motion to condemn the property giving the owner 30 days to bring the structure up to code.

Mr. James thanked the Council for the first round of cameras, which will be installed once administrative approval is received. He explained that the cameras will help the City address blight and will be placed throughout the City. The cameras are equipped with GPS technology and live monitoring capabilities, which will be activated once clearance is granted.

RESOLUTIONS AND MINUTE ENTRIES:

Council

(a.) Motion failed to adopt a Resolution appointing Karen Jefferson to the Board of Commissioners for the Southside Economic Development District. (There were no public comments.)

Ms. Woods stated she received many phone calls on this and she would like to remove this from the agenda pending the open investigation results.

Mr. McFarland stated there is no need for motion with it being Ms. Woods appointee and if there is no motion the item is dead. He said if she want to go that route it will open a can of worms and it's going to be dealt with later on.

Ms. Woods redrew her motion.

Mr. McFarland stated with no motion now this Resolution is null and void which this position is open to any member of the Council.

(b.) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack, seconded by Mr. Muhammad and unanimously approved Resolution No. 9017 granting an exception to the Open Container Ordinance to the City of Monroe for the annual Rollin' on the Riverfront pursuant to Monroe City Code Sec. 12-231 D. (Open Container Ordinance), and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

(c) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved Resolution No. 9018 granting an exception to the Open Container Ordinance to the Chennault Aviation & Military Museum for a Hot Air Ballon Festival pursuant to Monroe City Code Sec. 12-231 D (Open Container Ordinance), 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. 9019 granting an exception to the Open Container Ordinance to Ace Development of NELA for an event (Woofstock – A Pet Festival) at Forsythe Park 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 Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved to consider an Application by WhiteCo Gaming LLC dba Chance Bingo, 2102 Louisville Ave., Monroe LA 71201 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 Occupy Cleared) (There were no public comments.)

(b) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved to consider request from the Purchasing Division for authorization to advertise for bids for the G.B. Cooley Rehabilitation Project. The estimate of the G.B. Cooley House rehabilitation Project is \$825,000.00. The DBE is 9.50%. (There were no public comments.)

Mr. Morgan McCallister, City Engineer, explained that the G.B. Cooley House rehabilitation project is funded partly by a “Save Our National Treasures” grant awarded through Governor John Bel Edwards’ administration, with the remaining portion of the \$825,000 coming from the City of Monroe’s capital infrastructure plan. He noted that the City’s share may decrease as the Cooley Foundation continues to raise public funds. The project involves interior rehabilitation of the historic structure.

(c) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved Resolution No. 9020 approving the Louisiana Compliance Questionnaire for the fy 2024-2025 Audit. (There were no public comments.)

Mayor’s Office:

(a) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack, seconded by Mr. Muhammad and unanimously approved Resolution No. 9021 the appointment of Calvin Jerod Jones as Community Affairs Director for the City of Monroe.

Mayor Ellis said Mr. Calvin Jones is a very impressive gentleman and he knows he will be an asset to the City of Monroe. Noting his strong commitment to youth and community development and a proven track record of service.

Mr. Calvin Jones thanked the Mayor and City Council for the opportunity and for taking the time to learn about his passions and abilities. He addressed questions about not being from Monroe, stating, “Why not Monroe?” and described the city as a growing gem he wants to be part of as a young professional.

Mr. McFarland said he had the opportunity to look over Mr. Jones’ information and was very impressed with everything. He said he will be voting in favor of confirming Mr. Jones tonight.

Mrs. Ezernack said she had the opportunity to speak with Mr. Jones by phone and then in person and she was very much impressed with his passion for the community, youth, and what he can add to our city and community affairs division.

Ms. Woods said she had the pleasure of having a whirlwind of an experience with Mr. Jones. She said he was here on last week at the same time they were doing the fire prevention week when they had about 400 children at the fire training center. She thanked him for sharing in that experience with her.

Mr. Muhammad stated he had the chance to meet Mr. Jones via zoom and meet him in person at the prayer breakfast this morning. He said Monroe is one of the few small cities that had a plethora of community centers. He said they are looking forward to Mr. Jones hitting the ground running. He said he was very impressed with his resume, and he conducts himself.

Mr. McFarland thanked the Mayor for filing the position and he said he appreciated him to the highest.

Engineering Services:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved Resolution No. 9022 approving Closeout Order No. 1 for the Forsythe Park Tennis Facilities Improvement Project. (There were no public comments.)

Ms. Sydnee Clary, Assistant City Attorney, noted that on this Resolution, the second whereas clause should read: “Add 37 contract days to the Forsythe Park Tennis Facilities Improvement Project.”

(b) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved Resolution No. 9023 approving Closeout Change Order No. 10 for the Kansas Lane Extension (Old Sterlington – US 165) Phase 1 Project. (There were no public comments.)

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS & ORDINANCES:

Before moving to the next agenda item, with no objection from the Council, the Chairman stated the sober living Ordinance is not on the agenda tonight and will not be discussed.

(a) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack, seconded by Mr. Muhammad and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance revoking a 15’ wide by 300’ long alley between Orange Street and Apple Street and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Mr. McFarland stated it is his understanding they are doing away with the alley, and the City is giving the property to the adjacent owners.

Mrs. Sydnee Clary noted it’ll essentially be split in half and then each of the property owners that are behind the alley will get about six or seven feet.

(b) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance amending Sections 37-36 (Table 3:2; Residential Use Bulk and Yard Regulations), Section 37-37 (Table 3:4; Commercial Use Bulk and Yard Regulations) of the Monroe City Code and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

For the correction, Mrs. Clary stated that the 5th whereas clause should read: “Whereas the City desires to increase the height limit from 35 feet to 55 feet within the R-1, R-2, R-3, and RMH zones and from 35 feet to 40 to 75 feet within the B-1, B-2, B-3, and B-4 zones.”

(c) Upon motion of Ms. Woods, seconded by Mr. Muhammad and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance approving a Lease Agreement between the City of Monroe and DaveAir, LLC at the Monroe Regional Airport and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

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

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

(a) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack, seconded by Mr. Muhammad and unanimously approved Ordinance No. 12,274 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.

COMMUNICATIONS & SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. Mrs. Ezernack congratulated the Mayor on the outstanding prayer breakfast, noting it was a great event with a good turnout, though she had to leave a bit early.

2. Ms. Woods thanked everyone for attending and addressed concerns about the recent fire chief appointment. She said the media misrepresented the situation and expressed disappointment with the Mayor for not returning her call and for failing to follow through on his promise to involve the Council and conduct a nationwide search for the position. She stated that instead, the Mayor allowed the 30-day period to lapse, leading to the governor's appointment, which she felt misled both the community and the Council. On a positive note, she announced an upcoming street-to-street community cleanup beginning November 1 in District 3, emphasizing that community involvement can help reduce littering.

3. Mr. Muhammad announced a community meeting on October 23 in the East Parkview area, likely at the Comfort Inn Suites, with light refreshments. He invited everyone to attend Paint Monroe on October 25 to help revitalize Wilson Street. He shared that they received the NAACP Champion of Cause Award for their work promoting freedom, justice, and equality. He said he attended the banquet, and the senior dance was magnificent, commended Chief Mary Tellis. He said they had a cleanup a couple Saturdays ago with dumpsters and the Council will continue to have these cleanups. Next, he mentioned the 30 year celebration of the Million Man march on October 16th. Lastly, he said the homicide streak ended a 60 days with only 3 homicides since the summer started.

4. Mr. McFarland commended the Council for their remarks and announced that he, Councilwoman Woods, and Councilman Muhammad presented a \$20,000 donation to the Sickie Cell Anemia Foundation, thanking those who attended. He also requested an update from City Attorney Brandon Creekbaum regarding the fire department investigation, noting he has not received the information.

Mr. Creekbaum said he is actually in the middle of a trial at the moment, and he was working with Mrs. Washington on the draft report, and they made some significant headway. He said it didn't get finalized before the trial started and the trial is expected to hopefully end this Friday, and they should be completed shortly after.

Mr. McFarland wanted to know if his Mr. Creekbaum's is saying his assistant can't finalize this document.

Mr. Creekbaum noted his assistant attorneys weren't involved in it at all.

Mr. McFarland noted at the last Council meeting it was said that he would have it in the next three to four days.

Mr. Creekbaum said they tried very hard to get it out before his trial started but they couldn't get the final draft completed. He said he will turn back to it soon as the trial ends and he wants this done just as much as Mr. McFarland.

Mr. McFarland wanted to know when will he have this report.

Mr. Creekbaum said next week.

Mr. McFarland said he needs this report because this has been lingering too long. He said they have to put more rules and regulations in place concerning trash, garbage, and illegal dumping. He said they will need some teeth in the Ordinance in order to have higher fines and for Mr. Creekbaum to start preparing that also; to look at the max amount the City can charge for illegal dumping.

Citizen's Participation:

1. Mr. Lester Pastor of 160 South Pointe Drive Apt. 301 stated that his protest signs on Central Boulevard and Martin Luther King Jr. Drive have been removed twice. He said he was told the area is private property but argued that political campaign signs are allowed there, and he should have the same rights. He recalled being jailed in 1987 for a similar issue and said he continues to fight because his civil rights are being violated, and a court of appeal order has not been carried out.

2. Mr. Hermon Jones of 1051 Chennault Park Drive shared that he is working through the Northeast Louisiana Delta African American Heritage Museum with Raw Slacks to bring the long-

running production “I Have a Dream” to Monroe a show he has toured in over 130 cities. He said he sent details to all Councilmembers and noted the production received rave reviews from the New York Times. Mr. Jones emphasized the potential of performing, visual, and tactile arts to create job opportunities in Monroe and invited local choirs, dancers, and community members to participate. He provide his contact information 786-580-7389 and email info@theatresouth.net. Lastly, he stated the project was initiated in 1975 Billy D. Willams did it on Broadway for 86 performances.

3. Chief Mary Tellis, 700 Wood Street, commended the Monroe City Council for their commitment to senior citizen initiatives, noting that their support both personal and financial helped make “Dancing Under the Stars” a great success. She noted the Council’s compassion, dedication, and leadership, emphasizing that true leadership is about people, not just policy. She publicly thanked and applauded the Council for their service to the community, especially seniors.

On behalf of the 400 graduates of the Senior Citizen Academy, Ms. TJ Steveson thanked the Mayor and City Council for giving them a night to remember.

4. Mr. Herb Guillory, 1801 Woodhaven Drive, invited the City Council, Mayor, and citizens to the Annual Prostate Walk, sponsored by the Utah Chapter of Omega Psi Phi, on October 25 from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at Chennault Park. He explained the event is a nighttime “glow walk” to raise awareness about prostate cancer, which greatly affects men especially African American men. He emphasized the importance of early detection in saving lives and noted that proceeds will support prostate cancer awareness and other community health initiatives.

5. Ms. Kenya Roberson, representing the Louisiana Chamber of Commerce Foundation, addressed the Council about their annual Bayou Classic Weekend event. She explained that over 100 small businesses statewide, including several from Northeast Louisiana, will have booths at the Hyatt Regency Hotel to sell and market their products. Since taking her position in December, she has worked to ensure Northeast Louisiana is well represented and encouraged any interested small businesses to contact her for participation opportunities.

6. Mr. Curtis Garth, 2300 Georgia Street, reminded the Council of his previous request to be placed on the agenda regarding a City tree that fell on his home. He stated the City Attorney informed him the City does not accept liability for the incident and requested that the matter be added to the agenda.

Mr. McFarland explained that for an item to be placed on the agenda as a Resolution, it must be sponsored by a Council member, and no one agreed to sponsor it after receiving legal advice. He also reminded Council members that he has eight and a half months remaining as Chair and requested they give him a courtesy call if they want to remove their own agenda items. He expressed frustration about being caught off guard during meetings and noted he has never denied a Council member’s agenda item, only items from departments.

There being no further business to come before the council, the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 7:13 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.