

City Hall, Monroe, Louisiana  
December 22, 2025  
5:00 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 Rodney McFarland I, Chairman called the meeting to order. He then asked the clerk to call roll.

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

There was absent: Mr. Muhammad is running late.

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

Mrs. Ezernack asked Mr. McCallister to lead the Invocation and Pledge.

Rules of the Day: The Chairman welcomed everyone to the City Council meeting and outlined the rules: speakers on action items must use the podium to the right, have three minutes, and cannot return once finished. Citizens on the participation list may speak on any topic respectfully and orderly. Comments on agenda items must be germane to that item. The Chairman asked that order is kept in this chamber if not he will be asking the Marshal to escort you out. He will keep order in this Chamber, he asked that you follow the rules when someone is up speaking, do not interrupt and respect those as they come up to give their remarks.

Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack, the minutes of the Legal and Regular Session of December 9, 2025, were unanimously approved. (No comments from the public.)

#### RESOLUTIONS AND MINUTE ENTRIES:

##### 1. Department of Administration:

(Councilman Muhammad entered the meeting at 5:05pm.)

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved to consider three (3) Renewal Applications for a New 2026 Class A Alcoholic Beverage Permit. The Monroe Police Department has no disqualifying records and Sales Tax has been approved. (There were no questions or comments.)

(b) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved to consider four (4) Renewal Applications for a New 2026 Class B Alcoholic Beverage Permit. The Monroe Police Department has no disqualifying records and Sales Tax has been approved. (There were no questions or comments.)

(c) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved Resolution No. 9055 accepting the bid of and awarding the contract to the Lemoine Company, LLC for the WPCC GOHSEP Statewide 5% Generators Initiative Project and further providing with respect thereto. (No comments from the public.)

##### 2. Mayor's Office:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mr. Muhammad and unanimously approved to Resolution No. 9056 authorizing a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement with Grow NELA to secure additional American Airlines Service from Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport. (No comments from the public.)

Brookley Barnes with GrowNELA came forward and stated their appreciation of the support so far that they have received from the city and she is excited to talk tonight about this cooperative Endeavor Agreement with GrowNELA to support increase light frequency from DFW Airport to MLU Airport through American Airlines. This came to be because of the Richland Parish Data Center; they are hosting this surge in workforce in our region, and this current demand is exciting

but it's also converting our current infrastructure. One of the great things about the City of Monroe in our region is our access and when recruiting new industry, they talk about that access because it is a major asset on the interstate, on I20 real access and access via the airport. That is major when you are recruiting new investments and industry to come into the region, they want to make sure infrastructure stays up to speed with the current demand. Outside the workforce the community utilizes the airport, so you want to make sure this isn't a burden on those utilizing the airport for personal and work travel. Today coming to speak to you about this cooperative endeavor agreement that would allow GrowNELA to enter into a minimum revenue guarantee agreement with American Airlines. This is a common tool that airlines use when they are starting a new flight, they will request a MRG a safety net that they have calculated what the expected revenue is for this new flight. As long as there are people in those seats, they hit the revenue mark, and you can expect to pay the allotted amount and that's what's in the contract but as long as you hit that threshold you can pay less or none of the minimum revenue guarantee. Again, this is just a safety net and there is not enough data right now that they have been able to collect because the surge has been so immediate with the workforce to allow for this new flight to just happen on it's own, so they started a conversation with American Airlines to be proactive not reactive in hopes that they would look at this, the data, the surge in the current workforce, look at the demand in the community and launch this new flight from DFW to Monroe adding this is called a fourth frequency and right now there are 3 flights that go in and out so this is the fourth flight from DFW to MLU.

Ms. Woods asked if they are looking at bringing any of the airlines into the area.

Mayor Ellis stated that this conversation started with GrowNELA and at the time Kelsea and Charles, GrowNELA aggregated some really good workforce data, some 750 new flyers a month. That was calculated from the prime contractors, not including data from subcontractors. You can assume that there only going to be more flight frequency from the subcontractors and that was enough data to understand, not only from that but antidoted data from business who were already trying to use the airport and having trouble finding flights. GrowNELA along with Charles and the office set up multiple calls with not only American, but Delta and the City has a half million dollar grant that they are also talking with Skywest to see about picking back up that Houston flight and if not, there is good data in there. The grant is already written for Charleston, but also the potential to pick up Chicago, there would be an east bound, west bound and north bound flight. This right now what's being focused on is to increase frequency between the hubs the city has now and that is the fastest way to stand up with more flights verses trying to find a new flight and that process is a lot longer. As Brookley stated to be proactive about this they are going to require one of two things, data which we don't have that long runway data that they need, if you don't have the data, they are going to say you will have to put up some money. LED will be a partner in this, the three contractors and it is an all out effort to get more flight frequencies here because it is going to be critical not only for the contractors, but for our existing businesses that need to be taken care of. Yes, they are looking at not only more frequencies, but also new avenues and hubs to open up. The Mayor thanked Brookley for doing a wonderful job on this.

Brookley Barnes added that with the City's support they are very encourage by the conversations with the parties involved and they expect to have a new flight with American Airlines sometime in 2026.

Ms. Woods asked who the 5 CEAs are and they are the City of Monroe, three contractors and LED.

Brookley Barnes noted that this is a good show of public and private partnership.

Mr. Harvey added that it's like five different groups pitching in to make something happen that ultimately the whole city will benefit from. He also noted not being able to get flights for work, you have to come into Shreveport and so this opens up access to the other businesses and the citizens, and it's not just use doing it, you guys have a part, and the contractors. Mr. Harvey thanked GrowNELA for leading that.

Mayor Ellis noted that the bigger story for all, especially the City of Monroe, is Monroe has so many regional assets and even though this is in Richland Parish Monroe, the Parish, Morehouse Parish and everybody is benefiting from this project. The story is about the fact that we are in Monroe and the decisions that are made have a regional impact on business, personal travel, and

everything else. This is the way the City can take the lead and help a project that is impacting 10 to 12 parishes in a positive way and it is really good for GrowNELA especially when they talk to other prospects that are looking here as a fact that here's a group in Monroe that understands the importance of this and the ability to move quickly and they have done so and it helps them when it comes to talking with other prospects.

Brookley Barnes noted that they want to showcase how you can invest billions of dollars into what is considered a rural region and have big success as well as the right people fighting for you and being proactive. It allows them flexibility and staying competitive.

### 3. Engineering Department:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved Resolution No. 9057 accepting the work done by Diamond B. Construction company, LLC for the South Grand Street Improvements Project (State Project No. H.014347) as substantially complete and further providing with respect thereto. (No comments from the public.)

(b) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Resolution No. 9058 accepting the South Grand Street Improvements Project (State Project No. H.014347) as complete and further providing with respect thereto. (No comments from the public.)

(c) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Resolution No. 9059 accepting the Lee Avenue Street Improvements Project (State Project No. H.014348) as complete and further providing with respect thereto. (No comments from the public.)

(d) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Resolution No. 9060 accepting the work done by Amethyst Construction, Inc. for the DeSiard St. Improvements (S. Grand St. to N. 6th St.) Phase II Project as substantially complete and further providing with respect thereto. (No comments from the public.)

(e) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Resolution No. 9061 approving Amendment No. 1 to Professional Services Agreement with Architecture Associates, APC for the Monroe Transit System Facility Relocation Project. (No comments from the public.)

(f) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Resolution No. 9062 approving Task Order No. 19 between the City of Monroe and CSRS, LLC for the Downtown Pedestrian Railroad Crossing Project. (No comments from the public.)

Ms. Woods wanted to know what's going on with this project.

Morgan McCallister, City Engineer, explained that there is a \$100,000.00 supplemental funding through Capital Outlay that the Downtown Economic Development District put in and they were awarded those funds. They have unanimously approved the dedication of that funding for the crosswalk pedestrian under or over feasibility study, but that money should carry them into preliminary design. It will not carry them all the way through, but that's what the Task Order stipulates and DEDD is well aware of that.

Ms. Woods inquired so once they get beyond the preliminary designs where is that money coming from.

Mr. McCallister noted he assumed they are going to ask for other funds through Capital Outlay if not that it may be a reallocation of funds already in their bonded amount. He can't state for sure, but they have adequate dollars to fund the project and that will be left up to them at that point.

Ms. Woods wanted to know where this is going to be.

Mr. McCallister said anywhere between South Grand and 6th Street along the DeSiard Street Corridor. He imagined anywhere between South Grand and 4th Street is where this will be placed.

Ms. Woods said this will go under or over.

Mr. McCallister said more than likely under, but it is open for determination through that study.

Ms. Woods stated more like a tunnel or something.

Mr. McCallister said yes and it is for pedestrians traffic only.

(g) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved Resolution No. 9063 accepting the Kansas Ln ext. (Old Sterl. – US165) Phase I (State Project No. H.007289) as complete and further providing with respect thereto. (No comments from the public.)

#### VII: INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS & ORDINANCES:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mr. Muhammad and approved to introduce an Ordinance declaring a 0.451 acre tract of land in the Garrett Road Economic Development area no longer necessary for public use, revoking any dedications, and authorizing said property to be sold at private sale to Remington Monroe Corporation and further providing with respect thereto. (Mrs. Ezernack recused herself from voting on this item.) (No comments from the public.)

Mrs. Ezernack stated that she is going to recuse herself from items (a) and (b).

(b) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mr. Harvey and approved to introduce an Ordinance revoking any and all dedications within a 70' x 305.55' reserved strip located in the Garrett Road Economic Development area. (Mrs. Ezernack recused herself from voting on this item.) (No comments from the public.)

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

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

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mr. Muhammad and unanimously approved Ordinance No. 12,279 amending Section 9-21 (Buildings) of the City of Monroe Code and further providing with respect thereto. (Adopts Codes of Technical Regulations by reference). (No comments from the public.)

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

(b) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mr. Muhammad and unanimously approved Ordinance No. 12,280 amending Section 9-25 (Buildings) of the City of Monroe Code and further providing with respect thereto.(fees) (No comments from the public.)

#### COMMUNICATIONS & SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Mayor Ellis wished everyone a Merry Christmas and noted that from the Council and having seen our citizens in action whether it's packing boxes for food drives or cooking for folks or just spreading cheer and joy it goes to show we live in the best city; and have some of the best people. The Mayor noted that we have seen your heart and all that you do, and he wishes you all understood the joy he feels being called your mayor. It really is a special privilege, and he wants to say thank you for that, it is the ultimate gift that you have given him, and he wanted to say thank you again and Merry Christmas everybody and a Happy New Year.

Mr. Harvey wishes everybody a Merry Christmas and just a reminder to be grateful every day and his favorite gift is his wife she does all his Christmas shopping and him being surprised Christmas morning with everybody else.

Mrs. Ezernack also wanted to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and she hope everyone has a healthy and prosperous 2026.

Ms. Woods thanked everyone for coming out and asked Mr. Harvey if his wife picked his outfit tonight, then she noted that Mr. McFarland attire red and green so he's the Christmas present and her attire is a sweater made up as the Christmas tree. She thanked everyone and noted it has been a great year and wished everyone and their family a happy and safe and warm Christmas as well as a prosperous and Happy New Year. In District 3 they are always doing something fantastic, so last week they had

Christmas cheer with the Councilwoman, and it was a fun, wacky and Karaoke event. Mr. Jones, who is the new Director of Community Affairs, was part of that, and he had a good time too. Right now, they have an Elf on the street wandering around trying to see who is really celebrating Christmas cheer, so when they come back in January, she is going to name the winners of this contest. If you haven't decorated, we are encouraging you and if you are in District 3, you still have time because the Elves are out there on the street looking at who's happy in District 3. Thank you and happy holidays.

Mr. Muhammad thanked the Chairman, department heads, mayor's office for this year and as we go into this new year Happy Holidays to everyone. He wanted to thank Sam Crawford, Bonecrusher Youth Program, they were over on Renwick and they served 700 dinners and that was awesome. Also Mr. Muhammad wanted to thank Ouachita Parish Football team for winning the state championship and congratulations to Coach Benji Lewis and Principal Wright at Ouachita High School. Mr. Muhammad noted that he didn't think that Mr. and Mrs. Lawson were present, but that he got his time all mixed up and he told them to come tomorrow, so that's why they're not here. In District 5 we went around and if you are on Orange and Maplewood Street this decoration caught his eyes and this was an awesome display and he has a plaque for them and he will have to invite them to the next council meeting.

Mr. McFarland wanted to wish everybody a Merry Christmas and a Happy, Happy New Year. This has been a great year, and he wants to thank the Mayor, council staff along with his colleagues. They had a great year, and he thinks they got a lot of things accomplished and there is much more to do and let's continue to work together. Mr. McFarland noted that on Christmas day at Greater Free Gift Church they have taken up the slack after the passing of Cardale Blockson of passing out toys and food. They will start at 8:30am on Christmas morning at Greater Free Gift Church on Hwy 165 south passing out food and toys. They are asking those who want to come help to stop by and they will have a sermon by Reverend Dr. Ruth Collins Brown then start serving food and passing out gifts until it runs out.

Mr. McFarland noted to the Council that Mr. Creekbaum, City Attorney, has put some things together for you all during this break. There are some things we have been kicking the can down the road on, and we are going to have to deal with fees and he has mentioned this several months back. At the first of the year, we have to do this, and Mr. Creekbaum is going to put everything together for us. There are those out there saying the City alt to bite the bullet and not increase the fees, but to continue down that road the City is going to be bankrupt. If the citizens of Monroe entrusted us to do those things which are right, and there have had numerous community meetings when it came down to trash and garbage the citizens spoke and said they really want their same service and they will pay a little extra for the same service. So, if that's what it takes, that's what the majority of the continuant in my district have said and he went to other council members meetings and heard the same thing. They have got to accept that it is what it is and help move the City forward, so when you receive the information from Mr. Creekbaum you know that it has his blessings already. Mr. McFarland he is going to be moving forward voting for the increase of these fees and that the attorney's rational will be there along with other explanations of why the fees should be in that particular amount. Mr. McFarland is in favor, and they are going to have to do this in order that the City can have new equipment for trash and garbage, so sewer and water will have to be increased. He doesn't want to piece mill this he wants to put it all on one agenda and deal with it and it will be effective May 1, 2026. He is putting it out there so everybody will know, the citizens, my constituent, your constituent asked for us to do this, so it is time to do it.

The Chairman thanked all for being here tonight, it was a very productive meeting, there are no citizen participation, and he wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and he adjourned the meeting.

There being no further business to come before the council, the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 5:38 p.m.

Mr. Rodney McFarland I \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman

Ms. Carolus S. Riley \_\_\_\_\_  
Council Clerk

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.