

City Hall, Monroe, Louisiana
April 14, 2026
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 Rodney McFarland I, Chairman called the meeting to order. He then asked the clerk to call roll.

There were present: Mr. Harvey, Mr. McFarland & Mr. Muhammad

There was absent: Mrs. Ezernack and Ms. Woods.

Chairman McFarland announced that a quorum was present, and that the Invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance would lead by Ms. Woods or her designee.

Ms. Woods was absent and Chairman McFarland 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 Mr. Muhammad, the minutes of the Legal and Regular Session of March 24, 2026, were unanimously approved. (Ezernack & Woods Absent)(No comments from the public.)

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

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mr. Muhammad, an Ordinance adopting a Reapportionment Plan for Monroe City Council Districts and providing for related matters was unanimously removed from the agenda until the next council meeting April 28, 2026. (No comments from the public.)

Mr. Creekbaum, City Attorney, requested that this item be passed over to the next meeting because under state law as law that was either amended or passed last year, you have to receive approval from the Registrar of Voters and Clerk of Court prior to any pending reapportionment vote being taken. The plans were submitted to both entities and no written confirmation of approval have been received yet. It is expected; we just haven't gotten it yet. He is asking that it be passed over one meeting to give them more time to get us that written approval. The Chairman noted that he has no problem with that.

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. 12,288 adopting the Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Operating Budget and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no comments from the public.)

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

(c) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mr. Muhammad and unanimously approved Ordinance No. 12,289 amending Section 25-64 (General Fees and Charges) of the City of Monroe Code to adjust fees and charges for community center and park facilities. (There were no comments from the public.)

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

(d) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mr. Muhammad and unanimously approved Ordinance No. 12,290 amending Section 25-62 (Chennault Golf Course and Selman Field Golf Course) of the City of Monroe Code to adjust the rates for Chennault Golf Course, remove provisions relating to Selman Field, and provide for related matters. (There were no comments from the public.)

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

(e) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mr. Muhammad and unanimously approved Ordinance No. 12,291 amending Section 25-63 (Municipal Golf Course) of the City of Monroe Code to adjust the rates for the Johnny Myers Memorial Golf Course and providing for related matters. (There were no comments from the public.)

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

(f) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mr. Muhammad and unanimously approved Ordinance No. 12,292 amending Section 37-92 (Use Standards) of the Monroe City Code to adjust the occupancy limits for Sober Living Homes. (There were no comments from the public.)

Mr. Harvey explained that this is where they are aligning with Louisiana Department of Health where we had a fixed number limit on bedrooms, but it didn't account for square feet; so, this brings us in line with Louisiana Department of Health Standards.

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

(g) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Ordinance No. 12,293 adopting the Five-Year Capital Improvement Program for the City of Monroe from May 1, 2025, to April 30, 2030, and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no comments from the public.)

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

(h) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Ordinance No. 12,294 authorizing the City of Monroe to acquire certain real property located at 603 and 605 Atkinson Street, Monroe, Louisiana and providing for related matters. (There were no comments from the public.)

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

(i) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Ordinance No. 12,295 revoking a 15' wide by 130' long alley located north of Peach Street, south of Apple Street, west of Railroad Avenue, and east of Jackson Street. (There were no comments from the public.)

VI: RESOLUTIONS AND MINUTE ENTRIES:

1. Council:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Resolution No. 9110 granting an exception to the Open Container Ordinance to the General Claire L. Chennault Foundation annual (Red, White & Blue Airshow) pursuant to Monroe City Code Sec. 12-231 D (Open Container Ordinance) and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no comments from the public.)

(b) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mr. Muhammad and unanimously approved as amended Resolution No. 9111 authorizing a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement with the John Clarke Perry Corporation for the construction of a handicap accessible playground at Forsythe Park. (There were no comments from the public.)

Mr. Creekbaum, City Attorney, explained that the resolution that was in the packet is not the final version, the agreement is correct, but the resolution should say three parties to this agreement John Clarke Perry Corp., Riverside Landscape LLC and the City of Monroe. The substance of the agreement remains the same, the resolution has the same general terms, and he just wanted to highlight that because you are approving an agreement between three parties, not two.

Mr. Harvey amended the motion to reflect wording as explained by the city attorney in the agreement with three parties, not two and it was seconded by Mr. Muhammad.

2. Department of Administration:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mr. Muhammad and unanimously approved an Application by Bershatta Davis dba Timez Kitchen and Kocktail, 1207 DeSiard Street, Monroe LA 71201 for a New 2026 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 comments from the public.)

(b) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mr. Muhammad and unanimously approved to consider two (2) 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 comments from the public.)

(c) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved to consider request from the Purchasing Division for authorization for an authorized City representative to advertise for bids PR – Air Burner Project. The estimate for the PR – Air Burner Project is \$193,520.00. (There were no comments from the public.)

(d) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved to consider request from the Purchasing Division for authorization for an authorized City representative to advertise for bids for the WPCC Fine Bar Screens Replacement Project. The estimate for the WPCC Fine Bar Screens Replacement Project is \$1,680,000.00. (There were no comments from the public.)

3. Legal Department:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Resolution No. 9112 authorizing the City of Monroe to Settle Opioid Epidemic Claims with certain remnant distributor defendants and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no comments from the public.)

4. Public Works Department:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Resolution No. 9113 authorizing the Lease of up to sixteen (16) sanitation vehicles and authorizing and providing for related matters. (There were no comments from the public.)

Mr. Harvey wanted to know if the budget amount includes up to 16 vehicles and is that reflected in this current budget line. Mr. McFarland noted that it was, and Mr. Creekbaum noted that the budget just passed included all 16 vehicles.

5. Police Department:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Resolution No. 9114 authorizing the City of Monroe to enter into an Interlocal Agreement with the Ouachita Parish Sheriff's Office to apply for and accept Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program Funds (\$69,605.50) and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no comments from the public.)

6. Engineering Department:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Resolution No. 9115 approving Change Order No. 1 for the Georgia Street Pump Station project. (There were no comments from the public.)

(b) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Resolution No. 9116 approving Task Order No. 20 with CSRS, LLC, for the Young's Bayou Channel Enhancement Project. (There were no comments from the public.)

(c) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Resolution No. 9117 accepting the proposal from and authorizing a Professional Services Agreement with HCH, Inc. for the Water Treatment Plant Control Room HVAC Modifications Project. (There were no comments from the public.)

Mr. McFarland noted that he is going to vote in favor of this, but they always have on these agendas professional service agreements for different departments. He noted that they are not going to be picking and choosing and he wants everybody to understand that, ever since he has been on this council there has been a multi-simplicity of professional service agreements. So, when the others come up, he wants the same harmonious spirit, because we know there are some issues that have shown itself in the last few weeks. When some come in the future, we are not going to have this is-sum where we are going to pick and choose, we are not going to do that.

VII: INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS & ORDINANCES:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved to introduce an Ordinance revoking a portion of Reese Street (53' wide by 215' long) between Booth Street and Rogers Street.

Rev. Montgomery, 77 Langston Street, came forward to remind council that they did not receive anything in the community, church or anyone saying they were trying to close this street. He noted that street is a flow to the church, and when the young man got killed last Tuesday in front of New Faith Missionary Baptist Church if that street would have been closed then what. They had to airlift a young lady to Jackson, but the police had to bring the traffic through his church to that street they are trying to close. What you are introducing is vague, they left Canary Street off and his street but using vague language to camouflage what they are trying to do.

Mr. McFarland explained that the council went out to observe to see exactly what they were asking for and that is not factual, at first, they wanted the entire street. It is just a small portion, only 200ft on Booth end coming up and stop west of Rogers Street, so it's not going past Rogers Street.

Mr. Creekbaum added that it stops near the intersection where the property line ends, so there will be a clear intersection on both sides.

Mr. McFarland further noted that the council wouldn't want the entire street to be closed that would be unfair to the residents and the churches in that area.

(b) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mr. McFarland an Ordinance approving the annexation of ±27.378 acres, extending and enlarging the boundaries of the City of Monroe, Louisiana; providing for recordation

of the revised boundary; establishing an effective date; and otherwise providing for related matters was denied. Mr. Harvey voted Nay) (There were no comments from the public.)

Mr. McFarland noted that we are trying to work together for the betterment of the City Monroe and he can count too.

Mr. Harvey noted that he sat in the Planning and Zoning Meeting where this failed.

Mr. McFarland noted that he knows other things that go to planning and zoning that fail and this council approved it. This property sits where Mr. Muhammad wanted it in his district because it's adjacent to his district, but it is what it is, and you have that prerogative to vote against it. Mr. McFarland noted and they have prerogative to vote against other things and that's the way he will leave that. We are trying to work together, and Mr. Muhammad feel this will enhance his district and he want to bring eighty new \$200,000 homes into his district and we blocking that. Mr. McFarland further noted when the ball gets in his hand, he knows how to run it, and he means what he says. That is a slap in the face of what Mr. Muhammad is trying to do to enhance his district.

(c) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved to introduce an Ordinance authorizing the grant of a utility servitude and right-of-way across certain property owned by the City of Monroe in favor of Entergy Louisiana, LLC, and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no comments from the public.)

(d) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mr. McFarland and unanimously approved to introduce an Ordinance authorizing a Memorandum of Agreement with the Federal Aviation Administration for the use of certain real property at Monroe Regional Airport and otherwise providing with respect thereto. (There were no comments from the public.)

(e) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mr. Harvey an Ordinance amending and supplementing the City of Monroe Operating Budget for the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 and further providing with respect thereto was denied. (There were no comments from the public.)

Mr. Muhammad noted he is looking at where Administration trying to balance the budget at the end of the year and Mr. Moore said that is correct. Mr. Muhammad noted he got from the internal auditor what they are trying to do, and he see that they are straightening out public works and he is okay with that. He is not too clear with the storm item and taking the trash to the landfill, it is over budget.

Mr. Moore noted that on the Winter Storm Fern expenses the 3.7 million, that is for SDR and Tetra Tech the contractor and monitoring company, and that was the count and since it wasn't budgeted that's the reason that's there and it includes their landfill fees. Mr. Moore made a correction; the landfill charges is what public works has incurred taking the items to the landfill.

Mr. Muhammad asked and not SDR, Mr. Moore said not SDR, correct.

Mr. Muhammad asked so SDR didn't have a landfill charge and didn't they take stuff to the landfill.

Mr. Creekbaum explained that there were two ways SDR invoices were going to be handled, one, they were going to pay them and then pass them through to us as part of their charges or submit the bills directly to the city for those landfill fees. Mr. Creekbaum noted that he is not sure which one they are doing because he doesn't monitor the operation of that contract.

Mr. Muhammad noted that is going to help him when he votes and he then asked about the OCC Jail and that we are in a hole with the jail, they are not billing right it is too much of a gap with the billing. They are 173% over the budget and it is projected that we will be \$360,000 over at the jail, that's a lot of prisoners.

Mr. Creekbaum explained that he doesn't speak for the actual incarceration, but he can tell you contractually what changed in January of this year. The council approved a new agreement with the Sheriff's Office that include a \$3 increase per inmate, so that is going to have an immediate and substantial effect, that is one factor the other thing and the Chairman and Chief speaks to this is the arrest rate. But you do your best guess on how many people are going to be arrested, you don't have any control over what sentencings are meted by the courts. You make your best guess and budget based off that.

Mr. Muhammad noted that you are not collecting your money in a timely manor from the jail, they are not paying us and now you go four months and then they send you a big bill. How are they putting late fees on this, the contract says 12% and are we paying that too.

Mr. Creekbaum noted that he doesn't know of any late fees being assessed.

Mr. Muhammad wanted to know how we are going to fix this because he is not prepared to amend the budget, because it's out of whack. Why they are not billing in a timely manor and what's in it they are billing for. You say per inmate but why is it going up because if you only got 90 beds, is it overcrowded. What's going on.

Mr. McFarland noted with SDR and they were first told one price and then capped it at 3million; that's one thing that got this out of whack. It looks like nothing has been cleaned up and then another company was given \$223,300 and when you first came before this council you said you were going to involve local contractors and you didn't, it was a local contractor and that's problematic. You got a city that's minority, but we don't want to give minorities any business. We have spent 3.570 million plus another \$223,300 that he knows of Mr. McFarland noted maybe if he kept digging, he may find something else and that's a problem with him. Administration said one thing and did something totally different. He noted just like someone can vote against introduction of enhancing a community, he can vote against an introduction of you all moving the money around. This was put on the agenda because it was just handed to him, no explanation. Mr. McFarland noted he was upset due to the fact that there was going to be an amendment to this budget, and he wanted to know why it wasn't given to him last month, but they wait until the last minute to put it on the agenda in order to run out the time. Mr. McFarland said that he wanted some answers tomorrow as to what department governs the funds in line item 2032 and where are the revenues they derive from and what was the actual expense that funded 92055. It's saying the administration, so he wants to know where it's coming from and what has really brought this budget totally out of whack. He needs some answers.

Mr. Muhammad noted before the vote that prisoner housing is \$762,597.17 and accounting estimate the expenses for February, March and April the estimated numbers will bring the total expense to \$900,000. Last fiscal year prisoner housing budgeted \$447,000, expense total \$385,000 and this year it has skyrocketed to \$903,000 at OCC. This is from our internal auditor, and he just wanted to know why it's so over inflated.

VIII: COMMUNICATIONS & SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Mr. Harvey had no announcements.

Mr. Muhammad - **Vice-Chairman** announced that they had a Peace Walk on yesterday over in Oak Manor. On last week there was a rash of violence. He thanked Mr. Jones and Rev. Montgomery and others for walking. He got a chance to listen to the community and engage with them. They are planning another Peace Walk and keep it growing, there were about 20 that came out, so that's a good start. There will be a cleanup on April 25th at Carver, they are partnering with Monroe Chamber and will be doing Love the Boot Week, looking forward to cleaning up Orange Street Bridge back up to about 8th Street. If you would like to participate, please come around 8:30am. Mr. Muhammad read a statement of reports of a racist remark made by a city employee and wanted to make absolutely clear that this kind of language and behavior is unacceptable and it does not reflect the values of this council, this administration, or the people of Monroe. He further noted that his spirit has been really troubled since this has happened, and he said he will come to the next council meeting with a resolution about this and he is asking that they all vote in favor of it.

Mr. McFarland – **Chairman** noted that his spirit is low because they are trying to develop properties on the southside of Monroe and we blocking votes. He hopes and prays that we understand that God is not mocked, whatever man soweth that too shall he reap. Mr. McFarland said he is saying this not Mr. Muhammad and when a developer came to Mr. Muhammad and want to build 80 plus homes adjacent to his district homes that cost \$200,000 plus to enhance the City of Monroe, we don't want it, because it's on the southside. Mr. McFarland said that's hogwash and he is not going to sit back with a shut mouth on how we want to fast tract some things and go at a turtle speed with other things. He is not going to sit back and continue to enhance one area if they not going to try to enhance the entire city. He is upset over this matter, and it is his right. He noted how many times has a developer had an interest on the south side to build these types of homes then we come here tonight and block it. He said you all know that's not right, and that God and time will fix every situation.

X: CITIZENS PARTICIPATION:

Mr. Rob Thomas, 3603 Johnson Street, came forward to speak on speeding in his area, especially on weekends and safety, he is hoping city council will have a budget for speed bumps, he thinks that will help.

Mr. Charles Theus, 503 Speed Avenue, came forward to address what's happening, like with this budget deal and coming at the last minute. He thinks there are 20% increases in some of the departments, and he has looked at the budget, and it keeps increasing and then there's money that moves around like a chessboard, nobody knows where the money ends up or questions it and just vote. Then you have people that want to enlarge a district in downtown, and we can't get Southside Economic Development a decent salary or budget or TIF. All these things getting done for downtown and he has never spoken against anybody's project, and he is not against it now, he's saying let's be fair.

Mr. Vern Hall, 1007 Thomas Avenue, came forward to address the conditions of the canals by the railroad in his area, it's stagnant.

Mr. Herbert Gray, 919 Debra Street, came forward to address economic development as it pertains to Flag Football in this area, which is a growing sport for young ladies. He wants to expand it to Monroe and make it a hub.

Mr. Robert Johnson, 2608 Coolidge, Union 2388 President came forward and noted that on last council meeting he spoke on no one returning calls and he thanked Mr. McCallister who reached out and they had a good meeting. He noted that you have department heads wanting to make moves, but you have people in the wrong place making bad decisions. Money is flowing through the city, and everybody is getting money but the city employees who make this city.

Mr. Perroyt Epting, 1004 Speed Avenue, President and founder of Southern Youth Movement, Non Profit came forward and noted that they have launched the first all-girls/women flag football league her in northeast Louisiana, they currently have over 250 girls signed up throughout all districts in Monroe. They have contact leagues in Shreveport, Lake Charles and Lafayette totaling 500 girls in the league and they are still doing registration, and the season is set to start in June. We want to bring hope and opportunity to our young girls and focus on how to help the young men, and it keeps coming back that if we can bring in the women it will help with the men. They are sponsored by USA Football and what they are here for is the Beyond the Lines that they are setting up and the investment will help curve the crime rate.

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

Rodney McFarland, I
Chairman

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.