

City Hall, Monroe, Louisiana
June 9, 2026
4:00PM

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 present: Ms. Woods, Mrs. Ezernack, Mr. Muhammad, and Mr. McFarland

There absent: Mr. Harvey

Chairman McFarland announced that the quorum was present, and that the Invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance would be led Mr. Muhammad.

Rules of the Day: Chairman McFarland 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. Chairman McFarland 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. Chairman McFarland also advised department heads they could address agenda items pertaining to their departments without time limitations.

Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Ms. Woods, the minutes of the Legal and Regular Session of June 9, 2026, were approved. (Mrs. Ezernack abstained) (No comments from the public)

V: PRESENTATION:

Joan Hampton, President SOS Pets of Ouachita Joan Hampton, President of SOS Pets of Ouachita, provided an update on the construction of a new animal shelter to replace the existing West Monroe facility. She stated that the nonprofit, established in 2017, has raised more than \$1 million through donations, charitable gaming funds, and public support. The new shelter, currently under construction in Monroe, will include approximately 100 kennels, climate-controlled housing, and future plans for a spay/neuter surgical room and outdoor play area. Ms. Hampton noted that fundraising efforts were delayed during the pandemic but have since resumed. She advised that the project is estimated to cost \$5 million and requested that the City of Monroe consider providing financial support comparable to West Monroe's contribution of \$30,000.

Mr. Muhammad asked whether the mayors of Sterlington, West Monroe, and Richwood had agreed to participate in the initiative.

Ms. Hampton confirmed that they had agreed to participate.

Chairman McFarland stated that the matter would be referred to Mayor Ellis for further handling.

Mayor Ellis advised that discussions had already taken place and that he would assume responsibility for leading the presentation.

Chairman McFarland stated that, due to the pending court case and limited time before proceedings begin, the council would not have sufficient opportunity to participate effectively if Agenda Item A were approved.

On another note, Chairman McFarland, for the record, stated that he had received a request to consider a Professional Services Contract with Undercurrent. However, because Kinetix Technology currently holds the contract, he would not support replacing the firm unless the city first formally ends its existing agreement. He stated that he was not involved in hiring Kinetix Technology and would not participate in any effort to terminate its services. If the city chooses to discontinue the contract before the next council meeting, he would then consider Undercurrent and any other qualified applicants for placement on a future agenda.

1. Council:

Chairman McFarland request a motion to pull this agenda item.

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Ms. Woods, and unanimously approved to pull resolution authorizing the Monroe City Council to participate in or join certain litigation concerning the payment of funds under a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement and further providing with respect thereto. (No comments from the public)

Chairman McFarland reiterated that he had been asked to pull agenda item A because of the upcoming court case and the limited time available for the council to participate effectively. He again requested a motion to pull the item from the agenda.

Mr. Muhammad stated that he wished to proceed with a motion as the item appeared on the agenda, noting that if the motion did not receive a second, it would automatically fail.

Mrs. Clary explained that the item should be addressed as written on the agenda. She noted that if no second is received for the motion, it would not move forward.

Chairman McFarland announced there will be an orderly meeting. The public will have a moment to address the council.

(b) Upon motion of Ms. Woods, seconded by Mr. Muhammad, and unanimously approved Resolution No. authorizing a Cooperative Endeavor between the City of Monroe and the Southside Economic Development District for the appropriation and use of funds for economic development purposes. (No comments from the public)

(c) Upon motion of Ms. Woods, seconded by Mr. Muhammad, and unanimously approved Resolution No. authorizing the City of Monroe to enter into a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement with Massey Miracle Run Foundation, Inc. and further providing with respect thereto. (No comments from the public)

Mrs. Ezernack clarified that project funding is typically reserved for City priorities such as Fire, Police, Public Works, and Community Affairs. She explained that her support of Ms. Massey's event was a personal contribution and expressed confidence in its success.

Ms. Woods recognized the strong community turnout, assumed many attendees were participating in Massey's Run, and commended the team, parents, and coaches for their efforts. She stated that she was pleased to support the event and planned to attend the track meet.

Chairman McFarland thanked Ms. Massey and stated that the Council would support the event.

Ms. Massey requested a photograph with the Council.

(d) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved Resolution No. authorizing the City of Monroe to enter into a Professional Service Agreement with Proworks Productions, LLC to provide videography and digital media services for the Monroe City Council. (No comments from the public)

(e) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved Resolution No. appointing the News-Star as the Official Journal of the City of Monroe Louisiana, pursuant to the Louisiana R. S. 43:141 et. seq. and further providing with respect thereto. (No comments from the public)

2.Planning and Urban Dev.:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved Resolution No. adopting the City of Monroe Fy 2026 Annual Action Plan for the Community Development Block Grant and home Investment Partnerships Program. (No comments from the public)

Mrs. Hill presented the Annual Action Plan and reviewed the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding process. She explained that funding recommendations were developed through public input and agency participation, with priorities focused on housing, code enforcement, blight reduction, and community needs. She reported that the City received \$785,614 in CDBG funding, with approximately 65% designated for housing-related programs and the remainder supporting public services, community projects, and administration. She also highlighted partnerships with local organizations to expand resident services.

Mr. Muhammad thanked Mrs. Hill for her work and asked whether overall funding levels had been reduced.

Mrs. Hill stated that funding increased by approximately \$20,000 this year. She also noted that nonprofit agencies operate separately and shared that local high school students would be working with participating nonprofit organizations for the first time.

Mrs. Ezernack thanked Mrs. Hill for her outstanding work during the previous year and expressed appreciation for her continued contributions to the community.

Mayor Ellis commended Mrs. Hill and her team for the broad impact of their work throughout the community. He noted that much of their effort occurs behind the scenes, benefiting residents of all ages through partnerships, nonprofit initiatives, and community programs. He thanked Mrs. Hill for her dedication and service.

Ms. Woods thanked Mrs. Hill for her dedication and ability to maximize limited resources to benefit the community. She noted the positive impact made in District 3 and expressed support for additional funding to create summer employment opportunities for youth, helping families and providing students with resources for school needs.

Mrs. Hill explained that Community Affairs launched a \$20,000 year-round youth mentoring program designed to prepare young people for summer employment. She stated that staff will continue seeking funding while focusing on financial literacy, job readiness, career awareness, and partnerships to expand available resources.

Chairman McFarland thanked Mrs. Hill and her team for their continued service to the community and requested a breakdown of funding used for home demolition and reconstruction projects.

Mrs. Hill explained that approximately \$100,000 in reconstruction funds and \$258,000 in CDBG funding are available. She noted that applicants are evaluated based on program eligibility, available funding sources, family needs, and housing conditions before assistance is awarded.

Chairman McFarland commended Mrs. Hill for her efforts in securing funding and encouraged her to continue pursuing opportunities that benefit all city districts.

(b) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Ms. Woods and unanimously approved Resolution No. providing for the public hearing and public comment period for the Fy 2025 Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER). (No comments from the public)

Mrs. Hill reported on annual housing and community development accomplishments, explaining that the CAPER provides transparency, tracks progress, and documents housing activities and program outcomes. She highlighted a productive year that included numerous housing projects, one completed reconstruction, and continued efforts to expand services.

Chairman McFarland discussed ongoing improvements on Wilson Street and Atkinson Street, noting that work is being completed across multiple districts to ensure citywide benefits.

Mrs. Hill provided an update on community beautification efforts, including partnerships for public gardens and improvements along Powell Street, with additional projects planned for the future.

Mr. Muhammad noted that Representative Moore helped secure funding for improvements in the area surrounding the zoo, including Bryant's Addition.

Mrs. Hill stated that cleanup efforts and new housing development would continue throughout the city. She added that the one-day improvement project would rotate among districts to provide assistance and enhancements citywide.

3. Department of Administration:

(a) Upon motion of Ms. Woods, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved to consider an Application by Gurpreet Singh dba Smokers Paradise & Daiquiris, 7830 DeSiard Street, Monroe La 71203 for a New 2026 Class B Alcoholic Beverage Permit. The Monroe Police Department has no disqualifying records and Sales Tax has been approved. (Distance Report Cleared, Cert. of Occupy Cleared) (No comments from the public)

VII: CITIZENS PARTICIPATION

Derick Wilkerson, 3009 Gordon Ave, Monroe LA, addressed the Council regarding the Mardi Gras parade and asked whether the City of Monroe had any involvement with the participating organizations.

Mayor Ellis explained that parade organizations are responsible for organizing the event, while the City's role is limited to approving permits, coordinating street closures, and providing traffic control assistance through law enforcement.

VIII: COMMUNICATIONS & SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Mayor Ellis announced that Monroe and West Monroe were selected by the Delta Leadership Institute to showcase regional growth and collaboration across the Mississippi Delta. He highlighted projects funded through the Delta Regional Authority, including water, sewer, and municipal improvements, and noted the opportunity to host representatives from several Delta states. Mayor Ellis also recognized Discover Monroe and West Monroe on its 50th anniversary and expressed appreciation for its contributions to the community. He discussed ongoing engagement with ULM students regarding local government and transportation concerns, particularly challenges associated with crossing U.S. Highway 165. He noted continued discussions with DOTD and collaboration with Louisiana Delta Community College to explore solutions through a potential traffic study. Additionally, Mayor Ellis shared information from recent meetings with regional organizations and the U.S. Conference of Mayors, emphasizing the value of building relationships

and addressing common challenges faced by cities of all sizes. He concluded by congratulating the Boom Team Step Team of Neville High School for achieving the distinction of being ranked the number one step team in the nation.

Mrs. Ezernack expressed appreciation for the positive developments occurring throughout the community, particularly the efforts led by Mrs. Hill and her division. She commended their work and stated her hope for continued progress and success.

Ms. Woods acknowledged the success of the recent Housing Fair Expo and thanked Mrs. Hill for her continued efforts. She noted an increase in community cleanup activities and commended Mr. Tolliver and his crew for their work. Ms. Woods emphasized that residents must also help maintain clean neighborhoods and warned that illegal dumping would not be tolerated. She stated that law enforcement would be contacted when necessary and violators could face citations. She encouraged residents to report illegal dumping and stressed the importance of keeping the city clean.

Mr. Muhammad- **Vice Chairman** reported on a ribbon-cutting ceremony at Monroe Housing Authority's Burr Jones Lane development, where approximately \$6 million is being invested to rehabilitate apartment units. He announced plans to place dumpsters along Winnsboro Road and South 2nd Street to assist with community cleanup efforts. He stated that city leaders and Code Enforcement are working to strengthen ordinances and address problem areas and businesses along Winnsboro Road. Mr. Muhammad also recognized Mrs. Reed and SEDD for their dedication and accuracy, expressing support for the organization's continued growth and community impact.

There being no further business to come before the council, Chairman McFarland adjourned the meeting at 5:11 p.m.

Rodney McFarland, I
Chairman

Carolus S. Riley
Council Clerk

Erica L. Moore
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.