

City Hall, Monroe, Louisiana
August 27, 2024
6:00p.m.

The Honorable Chairman Juanita G. Woods, called the meeting to order. She then asked the clerk to call roll.

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

There was absent: None.

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

The Invocation was led by Reverend Victor Mitchell of Peter Rock Baptist Church.

Ms. Woods stated it is good to see everybody this evening and it is a packed house, which is a good thing. She said before the start of the meeting there will be some house rules. She said everyone's comments are welcome and this is the public's meeting. She further stated the public will only have one time to speak on an agenda item and once the public comments are closed, they will not be allowed to come back and speak on that topic.

COMMUNICATIONS & SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS:

(1.) Mr. Harvey had no announcements.

(2.) Mrs. Ezernack had no announcements.

(3.) Mr. McFarland thanked Reverend Victor Mitchell for coming and offering prayer for the City. He said he has always been a great supporter and friend, and he appreciated him to the highest. He noted on tomorrow at 11:30am at Emily P. Robinson is the SCI graduation. He commended the Monroe Police Department for a job well done with what they are doing with the Senior Citizens Initiative. He said he has been getting feedback from the constituents and they are very much pleased. On another note, he announced his third community meeting on September 12th Thursday at 6:00pm at the Light House Church located on Sunnyside Drive in Monroe. He noted by the first of October they will have a plan and priorities that they want to see in District 4 and on the Southside of Monroe. He said it seems as if the Southside is always being left out and he said they can always hear plans and see things that are in the making for the other side but not seeing it on the Southside. He stated there are those that want to silence him and thinks he is not going to talk about certain issues; they are very mistaken. He further stated the people of District 4 elected him to serve, represent, and be their voice. He said when he see some things he will bring it to their attention. He said further in the agenda he will be bringing some other things up because he thinks some are in the dark and not understanding correct protocol. He said they believe anything because it comes out of a certain person's mouth. He said it's a new day and a new way and the people of Monroe have spoken for new leadership and that is the reason for two new councilmen on this panel.

(4.) Mr. Muhammad said good evening everyone, and he said they had a successful community meeting at Henrietta Johnson. He said it was well attended and they heard from Transit, Acadian Ambulance, and the community. He said some of the concerns were with Public Works grass mowing and trash pickup. He said he met with Lonnie Hudson so they can begin to get dumpsters to do a better job instead of dumping on the side of the road in our community. He recognized Ms. Yolanda Lawrence, Beautification Supervisor, for the yeoman's work done on Saturday mowing and cleaning up all throughout South Monroe. He noted they are also looking at stop signs in an effort to control speeding on some of the streets in South Monroe. He said he has been working with engineering and he said if you have any area where a stop sign is needed let them know. On another note, he stated the City haven't had any murders in the month of August but there were seven attempted murders, and he said the City is getting better. He further stated that one thing he wanted to highlight is the murders in the City. On another note, he recognized Taurian Collins Jr. who is the son of Mrs. Jessica Collins and Mr. Taurian (T'lay) Collins. The Mayor presented Taurian Collins Jr. with a proclamation on behalf of the City Council and the Mayor for being an exceptional six year old with remarkable intellectual abilities and with him earning a place with the prestigious Mensa society. Deem a privilege and honor to Taurian Collins Jr. on his many

achievements and declare this day August 27, 2024, the official day Taurian Collin Jr. Day signed and presented by Mayor Friday Ellis.

Lastly, Mr. Muhammad presented Taurian Collins Jr. with a plaque on behalf of the City Council for his remarkable problem solving skills.

(5.) Ms. Woods said many may know a very prominent educator in this community for years, Ms. Willie B. Welch, who transition life earlier this week. She said she will be funeralized on Saturday at 11 o'clock at Little Flower Catholic Church. She said to please send prayers to her family as they deal with this life changing event. She stated she was a trailblazer educator in the community. On another note, she said there will be another giveaway this weekend of hygiene products and socks at the Kingsway Apartment on Saturday, August 31st from 10am until 2pm. She noted if there are things you would like to bring and donate they would definitely welcome those items because so often our children don't have those items. She said all the left over products they will donate to Shelling Elementary School for the children that need those items at school to be accessible to them. She thanked Mr. Morgan McCallister for coming to the meet and greet held at Powell Street in District 3. She said District 3 have meet and greets every third Wednesday and they are asking people to come out. She noted it is a different guest each month that talk to them about things going on in their community. Lastly, she said for those who didn't attend the Black Rodeo this past weekend missed a treat because it was phenomenal. She stated it was very well attended and she thanked the City of Monroe for being a sponsor. She further stated they were really excited and looking forward to them coming back next year.

(6.) Mayor Ellis gave a shout out to the men and women of the Monroe Fire and Monroe Police Department as well as Monroe City School for the back to school drive they do every single year. He said they dig into their own pockets and raise money to buy supplies for educators and families. On another note, he stated with the help of the Council the City have started a six year process of cleaning out all underground drainage pipes and catch basins within the City of Monroe. He said it also updates the GIS maps and finding some interesting things that have been in the ground and also cleaning their way through the City. Next, he said the Monroe Chamber of Commerce held the State of the State with Governor Landry to talk about his priorities with the State. He said he mentioned an early Christmas surprise and he said just know our region is seeing a lot of attention. He said they are so happy to see how he's working very diligently with locals to make a great environment in Northeast Louisiana. Lastly, he thanked Ms. Nirali Patel, Main Street Director, and he said downtown main street is accredited and the ribbon cutting will be September 4th at 9:00 am at Art Alley downtown. He said please join as they celebrate small business, development, and community for the event.

Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad and seconded by Mr. McFarland, and the minutes of the Legal and Regular session of August 13, 2024, were unanimously approved.

Mr. Curtis S. Garth, 2300 Georgia Street, stated at the last meeting he reported a crime.

Ms. Woods informed Mr. Garth in the meeting they will only speak on this item. She said he can definitely come back when it's Citizen's Participation and if this doesn't pertain to the approval of the minutes from the last meeting then she can't allow him to talk right now.

Mr. Garth said he asked to be educated, and he came up to City Hall trying to find out if this is the appropriate spot.

Ms. Woods stated this is not the appropriate time for it right now and when they get to Citizen's Participation he will be allowed to speak about whatever he wanted to talk about for three minutes.

Mr. Garth said he asked to be put on the agenda, and he is not on the agenda. He said he is thinking the minutes can't be properly approved if he is not on the agenda.

Ms. Woods noted Mr. Garth can come back and talk to the Council.

PROPOSED CONDEMNATIONS:

The following condemnation was considered:

(1.) 1704 Millhaven Rd (D3) – Owner – Gerald Coleman, ET AL. Notice to show cause was served. Photographic evidence was presented. Upon motion of Ms. Woods, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved, the building was condemned, and the property owner given

45 days in which to bring the structure into compliance with the Code or demolish the Structure and clean the lot.

Mr. Tommy James, Code Enforcement Officer, stated this is an open dilapidated structure and the property owner is present. He said he has spoken to the owner, and they do want to rehab the property. They are asking that the property be condemned and allow the owner to obtain the proper permits to continue the rehabilitation, giving the owner 45 days.

Ms. Mary Coleman, 1608 Bayou Street, noted as Mr. James stated they do want to rehab the property, and they are in the process.

Ms. Woods thanked them because there is such a need for housing in the community. She condemned the property giving the owner 45 days to bring the structure up to code. She said if in 45 days the owner is not done, and the City sees the progress they can just continue on.

RESOLUTIONS AND MINUTE ENTRIES:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mr. McFarland and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8772 appointing Franz Hill to the Interstate 20 Economic Development Corporation and further providing with respect thereto.

Ms. Woods thanked Mr. Hill for accepting the nomination to serve.

Mr. Franz Hill thanked the City Council for considering him for this position. He said to the citizens of Monroe he promised to do his best serving on the board.

(b) Upon motion of Mr. McFarland, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8773 approving the appointment of Montrell Marshall to the Monroe Planning Commission and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Ms. Woods said Mr. Marshall is the principal at Carroll Jr. High and he is doing some amazing work. She said he just entered Carroll Jr. High into a partnership with ULM where they will be doing some amazing work. She said when you see him tell him congratulations.

(c) Upon motion of Mr. McFarland, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8774 appointing Martin Litwin to the Monroe Board of Adjustment and further providing with respect thereto.

Mrs. Ezernack said they appreciated Mr. Litwin service, and she thanked him for taking on this appointment.

Mr. Martin Litwin thanked the Mayor and the City Council for this opportunity. He said he takes great interest in seeing the direction the community is going. He said anyway he can be of service he is excited about.

(d) Upon motion of Mr. McFarland, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8775 appointing Dr. Craig Turner to the Interstate 20 Economic Development Corporation and further providing with respect thereto.

Ms. Woods thanked Dr. Turner for accepting this nomination.

Dr. Craig Turner thanked the Council for the opportunity to serve his community. He said it is a learning curve with the new appointment, but he is looking forward to the opportunity to learn.

(e) Upon motion of Mr. McFarland, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8776 appointing Chresancio "Chee-Chee" Jackson to the Monroe Board of Adjustment and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

(f) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack vote failed to adopt a Resolution confirming the appointment of Rev. Ike Byrd, III as Community Affairs Director and further providing with respect thereto. (Ms. Woods, Mr. McFarland, & Mr. Muhammad Nay)

Mr. Muhammad said he just received the information, and he hasn't had a chance to look at it. He said he is not prepared to vote tonight.

Mr. McFarland said he has some concerns because of the vote we call ourselves OneRoe but it looks like it's one man. He said due to the fact the City is having press conference that is dealing

with City Council business, and he knows at least three of the Council persons weren't invited or informed. He stated the charter says the Council is the one that confirms, and he further stated he is kind of disturbed. He said it is very problematic for him to put information out as if an individual has a job without confirmation from the Council. He said he has said this more than once and it seems it has fallen on deaf ears. He further stated this is not the same Council that was here up until June 30th, and it will not be a rubber stamp Council or a Council that will be disrespected. He said if there are going to be issues on the agenda that you really want confirmation seems as if there would be conversations. He said without conversation there will be no confirmation and that needed to be stated. He said he doesn't like being disrespected or being bullied and trying to make him vote a certain way. He said he served sixteen consecutive years on the school board, he knows government, and he understands protocol. He said it is problematic when the City have press conferences and haven't talked to all the Council members. He said with that being said he sure everyone knows how he feels about this, and he can't even get a phone call from Mr. Ellis (The Mayor). (Mr. McFarland called for the vote.)

Mr. Harvey aye, Mrs. Ezernack aye, Ms. Woods nay, Mr. McFarland nay, & Mr. Muhammad nay.

(g) Upon motion of Mr. McFarland, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8777 granting an exception to the Open Container Ordinance to the City of Monroe for a Chrity Golf Tournament (The Mayor's Cup) pursuant to Monroe City Code Sec. 12-231 D (Open Container Ordinance), and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

(h) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8778 granting an exception to the Open Container Ordinance to Damon Williams dba Doc Chilly (First Sunday at the Zoo, Music Festival) 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 Mr. McFarland and unanimously approved to Passover to consider request from the Purchasing Division for authorization for an authorized City representative to advertise for bids for the DeSiard St. Improvements (S. Grand St. to North 6th St.) Phase II. The engineer's estimate is \$4,539,767.28. the DBE goal is 15 % and the source of funds is the Downtown Economic Development District until the next City Council meeting on September 10, 2024.

Upon motion Mrs. Ezernack seconded by Mr. Harvey.

Mr. Muhammad said he has concerns, and he said in the packet there was only one sheet from Mr. Curt Kelly, Purchasing Director. He said he doesn't know the scope of work or what is going on.

Mr. Morgan McCallister, City Engineer, stated he would speak on behalf of Mr. Kelly in his absence, and this project will be managed by engineering. He said this is the DeSiard Street improvement project Phase II. He said the City is currently moving towards completion of Phase I and this encompasses numerous things such as drainage, infrastructure, lighting, wiring, and pedestrian lighting from South Grand to North 6th Street. He said ultimately this project will be the cornerstone of the Downtown area and beyond. He said upon approval tonight the City will begin advertising next week and they hope to have contracts in place within the next sixty days. He said it will be 200 calendar days on this project.

Mrs. Ezernack stated this is basically just advertising for bids. She further noted when the contract comes in and if any of the bids are accepted it will come back to the Council for further review.

Mr. McCallister noted this project is 100% funded by the Downtown Economic Development District and so is Phase I.

Mr. Muhammad wanted to know when was the last time the DEDD met.

Mr. McCallister noted they meet monthly, and it was roughly two weeks ago.

Mr. McFarland wanted to know where the money is coming from.

Mr. McCallister stated DEDD bonded out 12 million dollars and allocated it to a number projects within the District.

Mr. Muhammad said he is concerned if the Council approves this they can spend 6 million dollars from where the post office is located back to South Grand for sidewalks.

Mr. Muhammad wanted to know where the 6 million is coming from.

Mr. McCallister said it is 4.5 million for Phase II, which is the cost estimate. He said this project is ultimately going to be 6 million and he described a lot more than sidewalks.

Mr. Muhammad stated he is not prepared to vote for this tonight because he doesn't see anything coming to the Council that is going to help South Monroe.

Mr. McCallister wanted to know what the Council is not seeing and where is the data backing up their comments.

Mr. McFarland said come walk with them on the Southside of Monroe.

Mr. McCallister noted it has been on record a number of times about things not coming to the Southside. He said in the engineering department he keeps up with this information and the department does a very good job keeping up with the information. He said for a number of months now the Engineering Department have been accused of not giving projects to the Southside. He said he follows the Mayor's lead and from day one he began to understand the Mayor. He said he has data and documentation proving that what the Council is stating is inaccurate.

Mayor Ellis stated if there is anything the Administration says that is felt to be untrue there is an Internal Auditor that works directly for the Council. He said he asked Mr. McCallister to be prepared because this is a new Council that haven't been with them for four years to approve projects and funding. He said there is \$54 million in drainage work throughout the City. He noted Districts 3,4, and 5 \$52 million of that has been allocated to Calypso, Young's Bayou Pond, Booker T. drainage, offsite drainage, and Parkview the list goes on. He said these projects have been out there and on the City's website. He further noted District 1 and 2 Deborah Drive drainage \$681,000 and District 2 Bartholemew \$130,000. He said the City have twelve Capital Outlay request all but two that have been submitted are all in South Monroe and the water treatment plant that benefits the entire city. He said the other one is a pump station for the water treatment plant and what Mr. McCallister is saying when talking about priorities Council members have come to the City about projects they would like to move, and they work with them. He said if there is a project the Council would like to see move work with engineering and the administration and they will see the project moved. He said if there is a project they don't agree with that maybe in the plans from previous Council that live within their district they should work together to move a new project. He further stated this project in downtown is moving forward because a group of property owners from downtown said this is a priority.

Mr. McCallister noted this project is in District 4.

Mayor Ellis said if they need more information they can provide it for them.

Mr. Muhammad said he received the five year Capital Outlay Plan that was approved, and he said he thinks there is a communication problem. He said this Council doesn't hear from the administration enough and he said before the budget comes up the Council needs to do some amending. He said all the money he saw in the five year project very little is coming to South Monroe.

Mr. McCallister said he would break down the numbers for Councilman Muhammad and he said he would like to read it for the record. He said excluding city wide projects such as the water treatment plant and Texas/Standifer. He said what he is about to read is District specific and he said District one 8.6 million, District two 8.4 million, District three 56.5 million, District four 98.1 million and District five 36.8 million. He noted ninety-one percent of the dollars are going to District 3, 4, and 5 that's the data. He further noted no matter what they say is going on and no matter what they say they see this is the data.

Mr. Muhammad said this needs to be done outside of the Council meeting.

Mr. McFarland said let's deal with some facts and when talking about District 4 it wasn't District 4 at first it was drawn in. He said it seems as if they want to develop and he wants the whole city to be upgraded. He said he want them to do everything possible for the entire city, but he doesn't see any type of movement on the Southside of Monroe. He said a portion of Downtown is District 4, but it was added in when they pushed them to a point to redistrict and carve that in. He said don't play him for a fool because he is not a fool, and he said he need to see some movement on the Southside of Monroe.

Mr. McCallister stated there is movement taking place.

Mr. McFarland said all they need to understand is the fact that there is really no movement on the South. He said they are talking about a OneRoe, and they need to see something done on the Southside of Monroe. He said all the painting a false narrative is over with, and he said they are not a rubber stamp Council. He noted they will ask questions, and the previous Council would just nod their head and go on but it's a different story now.

Mr. McCallister wanted to know when this information was provided to the Council.

Mr. McFarland noted the Council need to have a budget hearing and go through each line item. He said the Council needs to go through the budget to see who is over budget and adjust the budget. He said it's time the Southside wake up and see what has been going on. He said he is asking the Chair to very quickly call a budget hearing to see what money was already spent, where it went, and what the Council needs to adjust. He further noted he will not support anything else if he sees no project or some movement happening on the Southside of Monroe.

Ms. Woods noted she would get with Mrs. Stacy Rowell, Director of Administration, about a budget hearing.

Ms. Marie Brown, 1002 South 5th Street, stated what made are rise was when Mr. McCallister was spouting off all that they are getting in South Monroe. She said yes, they are getting a lot of blue signs some say TBA, and some are in positions where the work is sloppy. She said if this administration is spending millions of dollars that they cannot see that is a problem. She wanted to know who the City are giving these contracts to and she said everybody will benefit from infrastructure because everything flows South of Monroe. She said she is still upset about the Trunkline with \$7 million allocated only \$2 million has been spent on it. She said they can put infrastructure under the ground and something for beautification on top of ground why they can't do the same thing in the other districts. She said she has been saying for years OneRoe is not going to work, and everything is being shifted downtown and the boarder of the river. She said they already know that was the Mayor's platform but at some point they would have to share the wealth. She said they are going to have to start seeing things they can enjoy in the community. She said she is tired of looking at signs saying it's a lot of work about to go on but there are no contractors on it. She said to be announced means nothing to her and she said take them up put them out when the work starts. She said if they look at the signs there are no jobs listed and everybody know what those signs means it is time to move unless the work is about to start. She said they have to follow the money and if they are not following the money what are they doing. She said they are having all kinds of problems with the Southside falling in and sewage all over everywhere and it's not going to be a problem until it back up in North Monroe.

Mr. Billy Varner, 6414 Cypress Point Drive, stated to the Council and the Mayor he is appalled and hurt because the way this Council is displaying and what they are saying. He said who is throwing bottles in ditches and who is degrading the Southside. He said they haven't talked about the cars in the front yards with no tires and the people over there are the ones destroying the Southside. He wanted to know when will they address individuals that are degrading the Southside and he said they want everything for the Southside, but nobody is taking care of the Southside. He stated they put money over there and it's gone. He further stated they have to have sewage and what good is it to put flowers to make a pretty city when it's flooding, and they can't walk outside. He said he was raised on the Southside, and no one is saying anything about cars in the yard, won't mow their yard, and won't keep the property up. He noted this is a divided Council and Mayor is not the Mayor of the Southside, but he is the Mayor of City of Monroe. He said he heard Councilman speak about not getting a call. He said his phone goes out and comes in pick up the phone and call him if they want to resolve the problem. He said they all can come up and complain

about everything, but they will have to be a community, be united, and quick pointing the finger. He said go in the districts and teach civics 101 for the constituents of the district will understand what the Council do. He said right now they have young people who don't even know what the Council does, and they don't teach it in the schools anymore. He said they can point the finger but who suffers our kids, our grandkids, and the entire City of Monroe.

Ms. Kenya Roberson, 116 Glenwood Drive, stated she heard what Mr. Varner said and what Mr. McFarland said but no one can control every individual. She said they can't control every single person that litters but when they elect people they are supposed to allow them to speak for them. She said if they do not want people to speak for us then they go to the poles and vote for a different person. She said sometimes when you are fighting, and it seems like you are being bitter because you want more. She noted she is not saying nothing is being done on the Southside and she was raised on the Southside; however, she does see a difference. She said she knows that there is a difference in the infrastructure on Northside and the Southside and she is not saying what the City is doing on the Northside is not needed. She said she is saying it is needed throughout and quite contrary to what people feel or how they say Districts 3, 4, and 5 are the majority. She said she want her children to be proud of where they come from, and she want them to not be almost fifty and see a difference. She said she want them to see the neighborhoods and schools are good. She said it doesn't take rocket science just drive the streets, and she said she truly believe this Council is concerned. She said she doesn't feel a Council should be beaten up because they are voicing what they have been fighting for and finally they can be heard. She said she doesn't miss a Council meeting even if she is sick, she is here and concerned. She said she is not doing this for political gain but because she lives here in this city, have children here, she works here, and she serves, and she is concerned. She said she appreciates her Council speaking up for them and it works both ways, but it is clear there is a communication break done across the board. She said it hadn't just started and everybody need to reanalyze prior to coming in on Tuesday's and say let's take care of business do the same across the board.

Mr. Curtis Garth, 2300 Georgia Street, said he has heard some good stuff but when he first came up he would like the Council to consider the City of Monroe, and the City Council have a duty to take care of the individual first.

Mr. Muhammad made a substitute motion to Passover this item until the next Council meeting. He said he is not prepared to vote and doesn't want to vote it down. He said they have to get more information for them to not get in these settings and all this stuff happen. He said they have to begin to communicate across the board and he said he reads, and he does his homework. He said when he got the information for the Capital Infrastructure for the five years coming up he doesn't like it because he is fighting for fifth district. He said they need to go back and amend it because it was approved by the previous Council.

Mrs. Ezernack wanted to know how the first motion rolls into Mr. Muhammad's.

Mr. Brandon Creekbaum, City Attorney, said a substitute motion can override the principal motion if the will of the Council is to go with the substitute.

The Chairman called for the vote on the substitute motion to Passover the item until the next meeting.

(Mr. Harvey aye, Mrs. Ezernack aye, Ms. Woods aye, Mr. McFarland aye, and Mr. Muhammad aye)

Ms. Woods noted in her time as Council she hasn't seen this before and she has been on the Council eight years going into her ninth year. She said what is important here is everybody's opinion matters and she asked that they respect the opinion of everyone. She said her heart is heavy and she doesn't like for her heart to be heavy. She said they are doing so much right now as a Council, and she didn't like how anything played out this evening. She said they have to stop with the trickery and bullying. She said they have to talk to each other, and she stated Rev. Byrd is her friend and has been her friend for a very long time. She further noted she didn't like the position she was in, and they shouldn't have to bully. She said to have a conversation first and everyone get on one accord. She said they say they are one city, and they should get together and talk about it before it ever comes out. She said they see it on tv, and it hadn't come to them yet and it's not

fair. She said so many people thought this was a done deal and they didn't know it had to come to Council for confirmation, that's not good. She said she is feeling a type a way and she doesn't like feeling backed in a corner. She said this meeting didn't turn out the way she thought it should turn out, but they will continue on, but she is requiring that they have order.

Reverend Ike Byrd III stated he wanted to speak his heart, and he said the Council said they were unaware of this appointment. He said he called the Council Chair when he found out this had to come before the Council. He said he told the Chair about the Mayor's offer of this appointment, and she gave him her word that he has her vote. He said she said she would support him because she recognized the work he does in the community. He further noted he spoke with Mr. Muhammad for a while concerning this and he said he thinks he would be a good choice, and he would have to see if there is anybody else that is going to be a part of this vote. He said he called Bishop McFarland twice and left two voice messages about this appointment and he never returned his call. He said he spoke with the Chair again and she stated he needed to talk to Bishop. He said he got a message from the Chairwoman again and she said have him and Bishop made peace, and he said he didn't know Bishop had a problem with him. He said he told the Chair he doesn't base his relationship or his support of anybody based on how someone else feels about them. He said he doesn't know what the issue is personally but whatever the personal issue is that is between them and God.

Mr. Muhammad stated this is a personnel matter that doesn't need to be displayed in this setting and he asked that the Council carry on with the meeting.

Ms. Karen Gant, 2411 Wood Street, said this is the perfect example of what can happen when somebody like Mr. Ellis (Mayor) try to pitch this community against each other. She said this is what is happening right now, and they are trying to get on one accord. She said they are trying to be cohesive as a community and as a district. She said he has some new folks, and he has to swallow it and that is the way she sees it. She said Councilwoman Woods is her sister and she is also her Councilperson. She said she gets to sit back just like every other citizen, and she can detach herself from being her sister and be a citizen of Monroe. She said this is the perfect example of the start of them being pitched against each other and don't fall for the okey-doke.

(b) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved to consider request from the Purchasing Division for authorization for an authorized City representative to advertise for bids for the Barbados Blvd Pavement & Drainage Repairs. The engineer's estimate is \$1, 233,060.00. The DBE goal is 15%, and the Capital Infrastructure Funds are the source of funds. (There were no public comments.)

Mr. Muhammad stated again he will make a substitute motion that the Council Passover this item and he wanted to know when was the last time the Capital Infrastructure Commission meet.

Mr. McCallister noted July 2023.

Mr. Muhammad said that is a problem, but the City is moving projects out of the Capital Infrastructure, and they hadn't met in a year. He wanted to know who is approving the projects and who is coming up with them. He said that is the reason the Council is making these appointments to get people in place that will represent their community and fight to bring projects to the Mayor that the Mayor can bring to them. He said if they have moving projects out of the Capital Infrastructure Commission they are moving money out of this fund.

Mr. McFarland second Mr. Muhammad motion.

Mr. Harvey said Mr. McCallister can correct anything he says wrong, but this project is where a section of the road in front one of the fire department started caving in. He said a sewer line collapsed probably somewhere in the last 18 months.

Mr. Muhammad wanted to know why Mr. Harvey is the only one who knows about it.

Mr. Harvey said he walks by it every day.

Mr. Muhammad said the City is moving projects that the Council doesn't have any knowledge of.

Mr. McCallister said he hears Mr. Muhammad loud and clear in regard to the Capital Infrastructure Commission and he would answer why he hasn't called a meeting in over year. He said in early

July they had a meeting and discussed certain projects and after that meeting he was pulled aside by one of the members and directed and plead to not to spend money on a specific project. He noted two weeks later in the Chambers in a public meeting before the press and community that same individual stood up and accused him of not caring about that same project that they directed him not to spend money. He further noted he has not met with that Commission, and he said they are an advisory committee they will began meeting again.

Mr. Muhammad said that is not fair and he has asked who is the chairman. He said the chairman should call the meeting not Mr. McCallister.

Mr. McCallister stated he provided that information to Mr. Muhammad and he hasn't heard back from anyone. He said he can call the meeting, but it would be better if the Chair would call the meeting.

Mr. Muhammad said if they going to do what is right and he is here to do what is right. He said the City has moved several projects and he doesn't know how much money is in that fund now. He said someone told him it is down to \$17 million from \$70 million and he said they will put some brakes on this until they get clarity. He said the City is moving to much money.

Mr. McCallister said he would like to address the money and the figures that have been thrown around.

Mr. Muhammad said not tonight the Council will just Passover and get on one accord.

Mr. McCallister said this project is on the intersection of West Deborah and Barbados there is a major drainage line that is collapsing. He said it is an old CMP (corrugated metal pipe) line and they have video and capture footage up and down. He said the River Oaks fire station is losing a substantial portion of the parking lot as drainage pipe continues to collapse. He said public works has filled in residents driveway on number of occasions with asphalt, water line relocation, and concrete pavement in the roadway is being replaced. He said back to the fire station drive aprons for the River Oaks fire station will be replaced.

Mr. Muhammad said he needed that in the packet, and he received was a letter asking for the money for the approval.

Mr. McCallister apologized for that he said this came from purchasing and they will get on the same page.

Mr. McFarland said the Monroe Infrastructure Commission hasn't met since July 2023 and he wanted to know who is authorizing the money to be pulled out of the account.

Mr. Harvey said it is an advisory commission.

Mr. McFarland said why have a commission in place if they are not going to function. He said that is why they have to pump the brakes on this and get this in place because he is hearing the same thing Mr. Muhammad is hearing the account once had \$70 million in it now down to \$17 million. He said that is problematic and they don't have the people in place that should be having these monthly or bimonthly meetings. He noted there are those making decision, and the Council don't know what is going on and with that being said he support Mr. Muhammad motion to Passover.

Mr. Muhammad said the reason he is concerned about this commission is the fund helps to pay to pave and repair the streets. He said a lot of streets are being neglected but they are moving projects. He said he understands this is to repair a street, but they need to met so they can prioritize some things.

Mr. Harvey stated he would like to ask the Council to reconsider this because ultimately he doesn't want to be the person that says because they decided to wait they can't get fire trucks out of the fire station which is a difference in people lives. He said it is in his district and this is something he cares a lot about he has seen fires in that neighborhood. He said he is not going to have a good answer when he says they didn't fight for this because it didn't meet the timing.

Mr. Muhammad said he feels it is important, but the Council is not getting the information about the scope of work and the seriousness of what is going on.

Mr. Harvey said both of those things could be true. He noted this can be an important project and they can still get improvements on how people present paperwork.

Mr. McFarland called for the vote.

Mrs. Ezernack wanted to stress the Council this is not approving for this work to be done and the Council is only approving for them to go out for bids for this project. She said it still has to come back with all the information that Mr. Muhammad has requested but this is just the bid process to get it in motion. She said to Mr. Harvey concern the Council still have a big point of time before they can authorize the project to happen. She said which could be detrimental and horrible thing if the road collapsed and fire trucks could not get out.

Mr. Bronson Moss, Administrative Assistant to the Fire Chief, said this is just for the Council information that particular fire station (3) services that area that is very limited access into there and it takes a minute to get other trucks up there if that truck fails to respond. He said that station provides backfill for other stations and this city is an ecosystem of fire stations they are all kind of connected. He said that station fire truck is about 60,000 pounds and they have uncertainty about the foundation or the stability of the ground there and it's a huge hole that is eating into the parking lot where responders park. He said it appears to be moving closer to that apron and all that system down through there goes under these drives that these heavy trucks pull in and out of. He said it would be pretty disastrous if that trunk came and fell on the ground.

Mayor Ellis said also when it comes to Capital list there are things that have been recognized as a project that needs to have funding to it. He said if those things collapse similar to Hadley sewer line those projects then leapfrog the other projects because it is in a borderline emergency status. He said recognized as needing to be fixed but when they start collapsing and the infrastructure starts failing those get moved to the front of the line especially when the fire department raises a flag.

Mr. Muhammad said he appreciated the information and again he would like to have the information prior to coming to the meeting. He said he would withdraw his motion if it is that important.

Mr. Brandon Creekbaum clarified there was an original motion to approve, and it was substituted by a second. He noted Mr. Muhammad withdrew the substitute motion and Mr. Harvey would need to remake his motion.

Mr. Harvey motion to consider a request from the purchasing division seconded by Mrs. Ezernack.

Department of Planning & Urban Development:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. McFarland, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8779 authorizing the City of Monroe to apply for and accept grant funding through the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) "Older Adult Home Modification" Grant Program and further providing with respect thereto. (There were public comments.)

(b) Upon motion of Mr. McFarland, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8780 authorizing the City of Monroe to apply for and accept grant funding through the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) "Healthy Homes Production" Grant Program and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Mayor's Office:

(a) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8781 approving a Memorandum of Understanding by and between the City of Monroe and Lafourche Parish Government and further providing with respect thereto.

Ms. Mondrian Douglas, 5513 Long Drive, wanted to know if the Memorandum of Understanding is a legal agreement.

Mr. Creekbaum stated it is similar to a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement that terminology is used when dealing with other governments.

Ms. Douglas wanted to know what the City needs from Lafourche government and who will be overseeing those funds.

Mayor Ellis said the City of Monroe augmented the State shelter needs during times of disaster for a number of years. He said Lafourche, Terrebone, and St. John the Baptist evacuated directly to the City of Monroe versus going directly to mega shelters. He said this is something the City works closely with FEMA, GOSHEP, and many members throughout the State so their residents can shelter here in their time of need. He said it is an operating agreement that the City cares for their residents. He said it is an agreement of what is expected and the reimbursement for expenses that are incurred for sheltering.

Mrs. Ezernack said she thinks the biggest thing is they know where they can bring their people and have a place that will be ready for them in case of an emergency.

Ms. Douglas wanted to know if the City have something in place where they can get the same thing from them.

Mayor said it is spelled in the agreement.

Ms. Douglas wanted to know if the City Council have any input on the community centers chosen.

Mayor Ellis stated they have been predetermined.

Ms. Douglas wanted to know if the City can move forward on an agreement without the community centers being brought up to code.

Mayor Ellis noted they walk the facilities just to be sure that all the needs are met.

Mrs. Ezernack said the City had grant money for providing showers and things of that nature.

Mayor Ellis stated the City is starting to see a benefit that shelters are eligible for federal buckets because the City augmented sheltering. He further stated he believes Senator Kennedy and Cassidey have both submitted for four and half million dollars for each of centers for upgrade.

Ms. Douglas wanted to know if the City of Monroe would be using the Lafourche Parish emergency preparedness guide to help spearhead this and who will they be collaborating with. She wanted to know if it will be privacy of the legal Council and the administrator over the planning and zoning.

Mayor Ellis noted that would be the community affairs director who is over the shelter typically fire, police, and other folks like that such as GOSHEP, FEMA, and DCFS.

Ms. Douglas wanted to know if this Memorandum of Understanding strips any legislative powers away from the Council.

Chief Jimmie Bryant, Chief Operating Officer, stated for the Council's knowledge when the governor assigns a disaster declaration all the rules change. He said they technically can take our stuff, your house, and use it for whatever purpose they deem necessary. He said they could have people from wherever those affected areas are and the City have no control whatsoever. He further stated the memorandum allows Lafourche Parish residents to stay together, come to one site, they are registered, and signed in on a bus. He said it is typically people that have no other means of getting out of harm's way. He said the City have preparatory things to do before they get here because they have to give a certain amount of notice.

Ms. Douglas wanted to know if the City has a fleet of their MOU's for other parishes.

Chief Bryant said there are three.

Ms. Douglas wanted to know why Lafourche was so distinct that they could come in and take control of the community centers. She said if this is mandatory, for the City to hold off on this to see the details of this agreement. She said if the funds are allocated to Emily P. Robinson will Emily P. be able to receive those funds.

Chief Bryant noted for understanding the City is sign an MOU with Lafourche and they are essentially a landlord. He said any cost that the City incur they are going to reimburse the City which should be minimum.

Mrs. Stacy Rowell, Director of Administration, said there are rental fees they have to pay on a per day basis. She said the goes into the City general building usage fees.

Ms. Douglas noted it's very important for them to understand before agreeing to anything. She said those community centers in question are inside targeted areas and she wanted to know if it is also wrapped inside the contract.

Ms. Woods said they can entertain some questions on this a little bit later and she would connect Ms. Douglas to whom she would need to talk too. She said she would like to keep the meeting going and she appreciated her concern and interest, and she asked Mr. Creekbaum to talk to Ms. Douglas after the meeting.

Mr. Muhammad stated he emailed Mr. Bryant, and he thinks he received clarification. He said he wanted to know where the funds go, and he think it was said they go back into the general funds. He said the account doesn't have any revenue and he would like to see maybe at the next Budget Hearing that some of the money go back into the centers. He said Johnson community center is in horrible shape, and they have to do something about it. He stated they will come back with an ordinance to direct some of the money that can be earmarked for repairing centers.

Mr. McFarland noted again he urged the Chairman to hurriedly have a Budget Hearing to go through line items.

Engineering Services:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Harvey, seconded by Mrs. Ezernack and unanimously approved Resolution No. 8782 accepting as substantially complete work done by the Lemoine Company for the WPC-Equalization Basin Aeration System Project and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS & ORDINANCES:

(a) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mr. McFarland and approved to Introduce an Ordinance repealing Ordinance No. 12,192, which purported amended the Monroe City Charter without voter approval, and to restore the Charter to its prior state. (There were no public comments.) (Mr. Harvey nay)

Mrs. Ezernack noted this is for introduction only and it will give them more time to research this particular item. She further noted for introduction purposes only she will vote aye.

(b) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance authorizing the City of Monroe to take corporeal possession of and sell to Karen M. Jefferson, all rights, title, and interest that the city may have acquired to the Lot in Lot 1, Sq.2, Resub Sq. 18, Terminal Heights Addition, Ouachita Parish, no situs – Reed St., District 4, Monroe, La, by Adjudication at Tax Sale dated June 4, 20218, and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Mr. Muhammad wanted to know the address of this location.

Mr. Creekbaum stated there is no street address it's a lot, and that is what no situs means.

(c) Upon motion of Mr. McFarland, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance authorizing the City of Monroe to take corporeal possession of and sell to Kevin Lee, all rights, title, and interest that the city may have acquired to the Lot 6, Square 19, Alexander's Addition, Ouachita Parish, 3910 Lee, District 4, Monroe, La, by Adjudication at Tax Sale dated June 4, 2018, and further with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

(d) Upon motion of Mr. Muhammad, seconded by Mr. McFarland and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance amending and re-enacting Charter 13 of the Monroe City Code, Entitled Drainage and Flood Control, and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

(e) Upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack, seconded by Mr. Harvey and unanimously approved to Introduce an Ordinance approving a Lease Agreement between the City of Monroe and Miller International Properties, LLC for the parcel and building located at 507 Wood Street and further providing with respect thereto. (There were no public comments.)

Mayor Ellis leaves City Council Meeting at 7:59 p.m.

Citizen's Participation:

Mr. Curtis Garth, 2300 Georgia Street, said he reported to the Monroe Police Department that a government tried to do attempted murder against him. He said he came and ask the City of Monroe and the Council at the meeting what they would do about it. He said he asked to be put on the agenda, and he wanted to know the status.

Ms. Woods said Mr. Garth should speak with Mr. Creekbaum

Mr. Creekbaum said he is not over the Monroe Police Department, and he doesn't investigate crimes or know the status of them. He said he is sure they can direct him to the correct department.

Mr. Garth said this is the City Council's and the City of Monroe job. He said the Monroe Police Department is part of the City of Monroe and it's the City Council job to make sure each department or agency do what is right.

Ms. Woods said it is not the responsibility of the Council to oversee the department but that is the responsibility of the administration.

There being no further business to come before the council, the meeting was adjourned at 8:03 p.m., upon motion of Mrs. Ezernack and it was seconded by Mr. Harvey.

Ms. Juanita G. Woods
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.