

The Mayor and Council met for their regular meeting.

Those Present:	Greg Thompson	Mayor
	Wayne Adcock	Vice-Mayor
	Lee Malcom	Council Member
	Denise Dixon	Council Member
	Nathan Purvis	Council Member
	Larry Bradley	Council Member
	Rita Scott	Council Member
	Nathan Little	Council Member
	Jimmy Richardson	Council Member
	Renee Prather	City Clerk
	Russell Preston	City Attorney
	Paul Rosenthal	City Attorney

Staff Present: Danny Smith, Jeremiah Still, Keith Glass, David Jahns, Rodney Middlebrooks, Brian Thompson, Patrick Kelley

Visitors: Meagan Hurley, Wes Sorrells, Russ Horton, Lynne Horton, Catherine Buffaloe, David Brown, Beth Brown, Hannah Brown, Megan Brown, Russell Gray, Marlene Gray, Jack Smith, Anne Smith, Bob Hamilton, Vickie Hamilton, Jenifer Goodman, Dane Wagner, Marty Wagner, Doug Gray, Richard Edens, Lunnette Edens, Dennis Dudley, Julie Cohen, Corrie Beth Noll, Thomas Latimer, Carolyn Latimer, Blaine Bates, Lisa Smith, Jo Thompson, John Thompson, Ben Doster, Vickie Williamson, Chip Ferguson, Mel Still, Janet Still, Don Loggins, Rebecca Loggins, Vicki Cole, Claudette Woodard, Pat McGoldrick, Laura Powell, Amber Gemeinhardt, Ken Kilgore, Grant Kilgore, Jenni Yeater, Brantley Yeater, Libby Ferguson, Chris Atkinson, Jay Rawl, Terry Sosebee, Glenda Sosebee, John Laseter, Suzanne Laseter, Bruce Breedlove, Mary Bates, Mary Delong, Russell Delong, Lauren Jackson, Gabrielle Mitchell, Callie Moreland, Roger Dubrulle, Andrew Malcom, Susanne Autry, Holly Atkinson, Wes Bond, Jerry Cole, Robert Carter, Perry Sorrells, Sadie Krawczyk, Sharon Swanepoel, Beverly Harrison, Norman Garrett

**I. CALL TO ORDER – GREG THOMPSON**

**1. Invocation**

Mayor Thompson gave the invocation.

**2. Roll Call**

Mayor Thompson noted that all Council Members were present. There was a quorum.

**3. Approval of Agenda**

To approve the agenda as presented.

*Motion by Dixon, seconded by Adcock.  
Passed Unanimously*

**4. Approval of Consent Agenda**

- a. March 3, 2015 Council Minutes
- b. March 10, 2015 Council Minutes
- c. March 11, 2015 Airport Commission Minutes
- d. March 17, 2015 Planning Commission Minutes
- e. March 24, 2015 Historic Preservation Commission Minutes
- f. Approval – Purchase of Fire Hydrants – To purchase 25 hydrants from HD Supply for \$53,843.25. (Recommended for Council approval by Utilities Committee April 7, 2015)
- g. Approval – Out of State Training – To send Lt. Bill Owens and Lt. Andrew Dykes to National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland. (Recommended for Council approval by Public Safety Committee April 7, 2015)

To approve the consent agenda as presented.

*Motion by Little, seconded by Adcock.  
Passed Unanimously*

**II. PUBLIC FORUM****1. Public Comments**

Mayor Thompson stated that several people had signed up for an opportunity to speak on the same item. He requested that everyone wait until item number three under new business comes up to state their opinion. They will all have an opportunity to state their opinions at that time. Mayor Thompson explained generally there is a five minute total time limit for each side to speak. Since there are several people signed up to speak, it is requested that each side have a spokesperson, which has already been chosen. Each spokesperson will have five minutes to address the Council. Then anyone else, either for or against, will have a two minute time limit to come up and address the Council.

Motion to change rules for comments concerning New Business Item #3 – Closure of Boulevard. To allow one spokesperson in favor of the closure and one spokesperson against the closure, each to have a five minute time limit. Plus allow anyone else who wishes to speak to have a two minute time limit each.

*Motion by Scott, seconded by Purvis.  
Passed Unanimously.*

Council Member Larry Bradley questioned that since it is not a public hearing, if the same rules as public comments would apply.

City Attorney Paul Rosenthal stated that Mayor and Council are encouraged to receive public comments on any action items. He explained that while there is a general public comments section, the suggestion for flow would be to hold comments for the Boulevard closing issue until that item comes up. Then anyone who wants to comment on the road closing issue would be able to speak at that time. He also stated that Mayor and Council certainly have the ability to receive public comments on the request item.

**2. Public Hearing****a. Rezone – 830 Georgia Highway 138**

Code Enforcement Officer Patrick Kelley presented the application for rezone of this property from PRD to B-3 to be consistent with the remainder of the development. Mr. Kelley stated the total acreage is 33.1. The property has 1359.51 feet of road frontage on Georgia Highway 138, 265.22 feet of road frontage on Carwood Drive, and 162.12 feet of road frontage on Reed Street. The property is presently zone B-3 and PRD. This is a partial rezone and will put all of the property into the same zone. The Code Office and Planning Commission recommend the request be approved.

The Mayor declared the meeting open for the purpose of public input.

Mr. Dennis Dudley, with Brewer & Dudley, spoke in favor of the rezone representing CPS Partners and HCI. He explained that the entire property was originally zoned B-3 and part of it was rezoned to PRD in 2011. At that time they had rezoned that portion to try and generate some economic use for the property, but that was ultimately unsuccessful.

There were no other public comments; Mayor Thompson declared that portion of the meeting closed.

To approve the rezone.

*Motion by Purvis, seconded by Malcom.  
Passed Unanimously.*

**III. NEW BUSINESS****1. Appointment – Historic Preservation Commission**

To reappoint James Woodall to a five (5) year term to expire May 1, 2020.

*Motion by Bradley, seconded by Purvis.  
Passed Unanimously.*

**2. 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading – Zoning Ordinance Code Text Amendments**

City Attorney Paul Rosenthal gave the second reading of the ordinance to amend the Zoning Ordinance by implementing text amendments and changes identified in Exhibit A.

*Motion by Malcom, seconded by Little.  
Passed Unanimously.*

**3. Request – Monroe First United Methodist Church Closure of Boulevard**

Mr. Chip Ferguson, of 535 St. Ives Walk, spoke in favor of the closure. He stated that no one needs to be able to turn off of Highway 11 onto Boulevard; it is used as a cut through to avoid the traffic signal at Alcovy. The City would not be obligated to maintain it as a public street, because the Church owns both sides of the road from stop sign to stop sign. It simply serves as a convenience, and their safety concerns have been based on actual events. He stated that the Church may have helped in creating the situation, but there isn't anything wrong with wanting to provide new and better services to the people of the community. Mr. Ferguson stated the road would continue to be maintained by the Church as an internal service road and there would be no need to move any utilities. The Church plans to expand its front drive which will eliminate any concerns about safety vehicles being able to access the area. The Church is not trying to get something for free; if the road is closed the next step would be to abandon the street and sell it to the to the adjoining property owner which is the Church. If that happens the Church can pay cash for the market value of the road. Second and possibly more attractive to the City is that the Church is prepared to be able to donate land that would provide a suitable location for a Monroe Fire Station. The cost or the value of that land would far exceed the value of a strip of road that is unbuildable. This would be a great deal to the City in that you aren't giving up anything other than a road that you don't need anyway. Along those same lines any of the additional cost the City undergoes to accomplish the road closure, the Church is prepared to defray those costs as well.

Mr. Terry Sosebee, of 244 Boulevard, spoke against the closure. He gave Mayor and Council signed petitions and letters from the area; stating the closing of Boulevard affects more than the residents themselves. He stated this to be an on-going situation and in December 2006 Council voted not to close the street. Mr. Sosebee has lived on Boulevard since 1988 and is a public servant in public safety. The study showed sporadic speeding, but that can happen on any street in any town. He questioned if Boulevard gets closed will Waverly later be closed, and where it will stop. He stated the subdivision to be unique and historically significant. It has been in place since 1906 and is on the National Historic District. He stated the characterization of the street as a cut through to be improper; it will get you from point A to point B. The street is important to the people who live there and is part of the community.

City Attorney Paul Rosenthal explained that the structure moving forward will be that anyone wanting to speak either for or against this matter, order not being important will each be allotted a maximum time of two minutes.

Mr. Roger Dubrelle, of 1524 Lakeland Drive, stated his concern to primarily be safety. All of the handicap parking is across the street from the Church, and difficult for them to get across.

Mr. Andrew Malcom, of 230 Boulevard, stated his family moved there in 1946 and is glad to have the Church as one of his neighbors. He is petitioning Council to maintain Boulevard's historic and useful connection to Broad Street by keeping the road open. He does not believe the entrance needs improving. He read in the paper that the traffic study showed more cars than were thought, so that means more roads are needed not less. The only wreck he knows of happening there was sixty years ago. When Church Street was closed it did not affect any residences, but Boulevard has twenty-five houses.

Ms. Susanne Autry, of 224 Boulevard, explained that if the closure goes through the only exit to their end of the street will be Waverly. She went through there on Easter Sunday and there were cars parked on both sides of the street. There is a lot of congestion there at the Church. She doesn't understand why some of the old houses there couldn't be torn down and build a nice parking lot to improve the congestion. She stated her objection to the closing of Boulevard.

Ms. Jenifer Goodman, of 233 Boulevard, stated that she is vehemently opposed to the closing. Boulevard is on the Historic Register, a beautiful quaint little street, with all the people having lived there for a long time. She feels blessed to be there with wonderful neighbors. She believes closing the street would be a bad thing, and it will affect their quality of life. The members of the Church are not there as much as the residents.

Ms. Corrie Beth Noll, of 535 Carriage Lane, discussed how the traffic along Boulevard ignores the pedestrians on the crosswalk. Her family is active members of the Church. She stated that hundreds of people come through the Church doors everyday either for preschool, bible study, individuals looking for assistance, or kids playing on the play grounds. It is not only the church

member's safety that is of concern. She stated that she has witnessed people flying through there not paying attention countless times.

Mr. Wes Sorrells, of 1632 Gratis Heights Lane, discussed his close call with the traffic near the daycare. He feels that the road should be closed as a preventative or protective measure, before something bad happens. He works at the Church and is in charge of forty-five youth and they have sixty-five children. The cars cut through the property to avoid the traffic light at Alcovy.

Ms. Holly Atkinson, of 730 Clubside Drive, stated it to be a blessing for the Church and the preschool to be growing. The preschool can't take the children across the street and back because it is too unsafe, or on Wednesday nights when it is nearing dark. She stated it seems like a decision of safety versus a perceived convenience.

Mr. Wes Bond, of 417 McDaniel Street, discussed an accident which almost happened with his daughter last year when a police cruiser used the road as a cut through. He stated they have a Feed the Hungry Program at the Church where they feed approximately 100 people each month for free. There are two new early services; it isn't uncommon to have an additional 150 people at the Church on any Sunday. They have the Helping Hands Ministry where they give out cash. He stated that he doesn't agree with the traffic study and it does not tell the highest speed.

Mr. Dane Wagner, of 1420 Charleston Avenue, stated he has been the Senior Pastor at the Church for the past five years. He explained that they never dreamed that the emotions both within the Church and within the community would come to this point. It was never their intentions in any shape or form. He stated the honest reason for bringing this matter up to be for the safety of the children, men, and women. It will benefit the Church in other ways, but that is not their reasoning for doing it.

Mr. Jerry Cole, of 2511 Shockley Road, stated whether the street closes or not the Church will continue to grow and will create more pedestrian traffic. He believes it very important to take care of the safety of those crossing that street.

Mr. Robert Carter, of 249 Boulevard, stated that no one wants to be known as going against the Church. He is not against the Church; it growing is a good thing. With all of the nearby Churches there are cars everywhere during Church time, even in the woods. He believes that the big picture needs to be looked at to solve the parking problems if things are going to continue to grow at First Methodist. He suggested doing a shuttle from the hospital parking lot, the American Legion parking lot, or the office park parking lot. If the people were parking in the parking lot behind the Church and not on the street, they wouldn't have to cross the street. He stated that they created the situation when they paved those parking spaces, with the perpendicular parking when someone steps out of the car there is no way for them to see if someone is coming down the road.

Mr. Richard Edens, of 208 Boulevard, stated he feels that God will meet the needs of what needs to be done because it is an issue on safety and on parking. He stated that he knows what a tragedy can bring to a family, and questioned if everyone is willing to live with a tragedy of a loved one.

Ms. Perry Nelle Sorrells stated that she grew up in this town and has seen a lot of changes. She has been a member of the First Methodist Church since she was ten years old and at the time it was located at the corner of Highland and North Broad. As the Church grew it needed more room and more parking, so they purchased the property where it is now located. Over the years it has served their purpose, but now they have grown again. She stated that Easter Sunday the Church had 500 people attend the three services and Sunday school, so people were parked up and down the street. If the road were closed there could be more parking, then nobody would have to be bused into the Church.

Ms. Amber Gemeinhardt, of 229 Boulevard, loves her property and how safe the road is. She runs, bikes, and her son skateboards up and down the street. She doesn't have to worry about him because cars aren't coming through there. She is opposed to closing the street because it is historic. She stated that the Historic Society did not want her to change the windows of her house due to the integrity of the house. She feels that the road should have more historic significance than her windows.

Mr. Jay Rawl, President of Minerva, stated that four years ago the church had approximately 350 people in attendance on Easter; this year there were 1,100 people. He stated that Monroe is

growing, so there should not be a prevention of change. They are trying to grow the community, which is the reason they brought their company here. He stated that traffic on Highway 11 to be getting worse on a daily basis and traffic lights are needed in order to control that traffic. The traffic needs to use the intersection which has the traffic light.

Ms. Susanne Autry stated that she goes to the First Baptist Church and crosses Wayne Street every time she goes to Church, which is much busier than Boulevard, and she is 78 years old. She also doesn't understand why it matters if Boulevard is open or not when they have a parking lot in front of the Henson house.

Mayor Thompson thanked everyone with an interest in this item who came out tonight. There is going to be a winner and there is going to be a loser. He stated that he appreciates staff and the department heads for everything they have done and all of the information they have collected and sent to the Council Members. That will allow them to make the best decisions that they can.

Council Member Bradley also thanked everyone. He stated that he has wrestled with this decision over the past month, because he understands both sides. He understands the historic nature of Boulevard as well as the 65 year history of the Church. He stated that even if part of the safety issues were brought on by some of the actions of the Church in the past, previous mistakes can't be reversed. He stated he feels that we have to look at what has happened in the past from a historical perspective, what is going on to date from any safety issues, and even beyond that we have to look to the future. Just as this neighborhood has been so important to the City of Monroe, the Church plays a major role in the City's future, and growth of Downtown Monroe.

Council Member Bradley made a motion to agree with the Church to close Boulevard at Broad Street, effective as soon as possible. Then follow that by taking all of the appropriate steps toward the process of the abandonment of the road, with compensation due to the City at that point in time. Council Member Purvis seconded that motion.

City Attorney Paul Rosenthal requested Council Member Bradley to modify the motion. He explained that Council could provide direction to begin the process or look to the process of road abandonment, but if possible we need to be careful what the motion is. The issue tonight is whether or not to close the entrance of Waverly Boulevard at the intersection of state route Highway 11 Broad Street. He asked for Council Members to consider amending their motion to remove the language about abandonment, so that the motion would be appropriate and legal as the issue before Council tonight. The issue tonight is for the closure of the entrance, there is before Council tonight no issue of abandonment of that right of way of Waverly Boulevard. Appropriate state law procedures would need to be followed in order to initiate that process. This can be done in the immediate aftermath of this first motion, meaning the next and the next Council Meeting after that as is proper. Mr. Rosenthal cautioned the Council to not entertain any motion that contemplates the issue of abandonment at this time.

Council Member Bradley stated that he appreciates City Attorney Rosenthal's concerns, but he does want something in the motion that says the City will move towards the process, that the street won't be closed and just left closed and belong to the City. He stated that he understands that the process has to take place, but he wants to begin the process of looking at the abandonment. He is not making a motion that we are going to abandon it, just that we move towards that process, and what the state and the code require including public hearings.

Mayor Thompson clarified that the motion still stands, and the second still stands.

City Attorney Rosenthal stated that to be correct.

To close Boulevard at Broad Street, effective as soon as possible. Then follow that by taking all of the appropriate steps that are necessary toward the process of the abandonment of the road, with compensation due to the City at that point in time.

*Motion by Bradley, seconded by Purvis.  
Voting yes Richardson, Bradley, Malcom, Little,  
and Purvis.  
Voting no Scott, Dixon, and Adcock.  
Passed 5-3.*

**4. Approval – Walton County School SRO Program Agreement**

Chief Keith Glass explained that the only change in the contract to be the amount that the City will receive for providing the services. The funding amount for the SRO program will increase to \$46,231.00.

To approve the SRO contract with Monroe Area High School for the amount of \$46,231.00.

*Motion by Richardson, seconded by Malcom.  
Passed Unanimously.*

**5. Resolution – Electric Cities of Georgia (ECG) Participant Contract Amendment**

To approve the resolution as presented.

*Motion by Little, seconded by Scott.  
Passed Unanimously.*

**6. MEAG Bond Validation**

Mr. Brian Thompson discussed the petition for Bond Validation. He explained the bonds were being issued by the DOE, with a very favorable rate. This will save the City money compared to the open market.

Mayor Thompson stated MEAG to be one of the few power institutions that have gotten upgrade of their rating system.

To allow the Mayor to sign the Bond Validation.

*Motion by Little, seconded by Scott.  
Passed Unanimously.*

**IV. ADJOURN TO EXECUTIVE SESSION**

*Motion by Bradley, seconded by Scott.  
Passed Unanimously.*

**RETURN TO REGULAR SESSION**

To appoint David Dickinson as Interim Municipal Court Judge beginning May 1, 2015 for \$2,000.00 per month and to proceed with RFQ for permanent replacement.

*Motion by Adcock, seconded by Bradley.  
Passed Unanimously.*

**V. ADJOURN**

*Motion by Scott, seconded by Adcock.  
Passed Unanimously.*

  
MAYOR

  
CITY CLERK

The Mayor and Council met for an Executive Session.

Those Present:	Greg Thompson	Mayor
	Wayne Adcock	Vice-Mayor
	Lee Malcom	Council Member
	Denise Dixon	Council Member
	Nathan Purvis	Council Member
	Larry Bradley	Council Member
	Rita Scott	Council Member
	Nathan Little	Council Member
	Jimmy Richardson	Council Member
	Renee Prather	City Clerk
	Russell Preston	City Attorney
	Paul Rosenthal	City Attorney

**I. Approval of Agenda**

**II. Real Estate Issue (s)**

**1. Real Estate Matter**

Real Estate matters were discussed, including attorney-client discussions.

**III. Personnel Issue (s)**

**1. Personnel Matter**

Personnel matters were discussed, including attorney-client discussions.

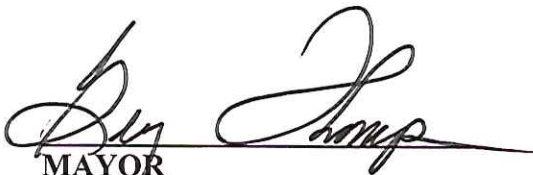
**IV. Legal Issue (s)**

**1. Legal Matter**

Legal matters were discussed, including attorney-client discussions.

**V. Adjourn to Regular Session**

*Motion by Bradley, seconded by Adcock.  
Passed Unanimously.*

  
MAYOR

  
CITY CLERK