

CITY COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLANNING MEETING
300 WEST CROWELL STREET
MONROE, NORTH CAROLINA 28112
JANUARY 14, 2025– 4:00 P.M.
AGENDA
www.monroenc.org

1. Downtown Murals
 - A. Mural Presentations
 - B. Call for Public Hearing to be Held February 11, 2025
2. Economic Development Committee
3. New Economic Development Position and Budget Authorization
4. Utility Administration Restructuring
5. Ceremonial Keys to City of Monroe
6. Teacher Incentive Program
7. City of Monroe Boards, Commissions and Committees Workshop
8. Closed Session pursuant to North Carolina General Statute Sections 143-318.11(a)(1) and (a)(3) *Christopher Rowan vs. City of Monroe* and (a)(5)

-
- **Agenda** is tentative and is subject to change up to and including the time of the meeting.
 - At the discretion of City Council, **Agenda Items** listed above that are not discussed at the Strategic Planning Meeting or moved at the request of Council, may be carried forward to the City Council Regular Meeting at 6:00 p.m. to be considered.
 - **Cell Phones/Pagers:** As a courtesy, please turn off cell phones and pagers while Meeting is in progress.



STAFF REPORT

TO: City Council

VIA: Mark Watson, City Manager

DATE: January 14, 2025

FROM: Lisa Hollowell, Assistant City Manager

PREPARED BY: Lisa Hollowell, Assistant City Manager

SUBJECT: Call for Public Hearing to be Held February 11, 2025 to Consider a Mural Painting Design

SUMMARY STATEMENT

City Council is requested to call for a public hearing to be held on February 11, 2025 to hear the following request related to a City-sponsored mural to be painted on 215 N. Main Street, Monroe, owned by Mr. John Wiggins.

REVIEW

The Girls Who Paint Murals, LLC (GWP) has been hired by the City of Monroe to create the first City-commissioned mural in downtown Monroe.

- As part of the FY 2024-25 budget, the City Council allocated funding to commission murals on downtown buildings to enhance the area's ambiance. The Downtown Office issued a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for this project.
- GWP was selected from 14 submitted proposals after a thorough evaluation process involving six reviewers, including City staff and local downtown leaders, followed by interviews. A second artist has also been selected for a future mural.
- GWP has been contracted to paint a mural on the rear of the building at 215 N. Main Street, located at the corner of Franklin Street and Stewart Street. This location was recommended by the Downtown Advisory Board due to its prominence as a gateway into the downtown area. The second artist's mural project is still in its early stages.
- A subgroup from the Downtown Advisory Committee, along with building owner Mr. John Wiggins, has met twice to discuss the mural's components, colors, and themes. This information has been shared with GWP.

- GWP is currently in the design phase and will meet virtually with the Subgroup to gather input on the design.
 - The design phase is expected to be completed for the February public hearing, where the City Council will review the design, hear public comments, and make any necessary adjustments before approving the final version.
-

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends City Council call for a public hearing to be held February 11, 2025, to consider the design for the first mural in downtown Monroe.



STAFF REPORT

TO: City Council

VIA: Terry Sholar, Senior Staff Attorney

DATE: January 14, 2025

FROM: Mark Watson, City Manager

PREPARED BY: Teresa V. Campo, Strategic Projects Manager

SUBJECT: Economic Development Committee

SUMMARY STATEMENT

On December 10, 2024 the City Council adopted an action during the City Council's Strategic City Council Meeting to form a mayoral committee. Legal council requests reconsideration of creating it as a "Mayoral Committee" and recommends it be created as a staff committee until a formal committee is required i.e. an advisory committee.

REVIEW

On December 10, 2024 City Council took action to form an Economic Development Committee and designated it as a mayoral committee which requires certain legal procedures regarding meetings. Legal recommends the committee should not be a formal Mayoral Committee, but be designated a City staff committee composed primarily of City Staff and three City Council members. The purpose and function of the Committee will remain the same as adopted by City Council.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends City Council consider amending the creation of the Economic Development Committee and remove the designation of Mayoral Committee and designate it a staff committee that includes primarily City Staff and up to three council members as participants with the same purpose and objective.

STAFF REPORT

TO: City Council

VIA: Mark Watson, City Manager

DATE: January 14, 2025

FROM: Lisa Strickland, Finance Director

PREPARED BY: Lisa Strickland, Finance Director

SUBJECT: New Economic Development Position and Budget Authorization

SUMMARY STATEMENT

The Economic Development Staff Committee met on January 8, 2025 and has directed staff to create an Economic Development Department and add one position to this department to focus on business development and existing industry.

REVIEW

The Economic Development Staff Committee met on January 8, 2025 and has directed staff to create an Economic Development Department. The committee discussed a focus on existing industry and marketing and decided on a Business Development Professional position to focus on these areas. One full-time position is requested to be added to the City's authorized positions. The job title and description will be developed and presented to the Committee at a subsequent meeting.

Funding from the Monroe-Union County Economic Development Commission agreement is remaining in the City's current approved budget in the amount of \$257,499. The County and City have both agreed not to contribute any additional funding to this entity. Staff is requesting that these funds be reallocated to cover the personnel costs and any costs associated with establishing an office, computer, phone, etc. for the new position. Staff is also requesting these same funds be utilized for the contract with Walter C. Sprouse. Mr. Sprouse is the consultant working with the City to establish the new Department.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that City Council create a full-time Business Development position and reallocate funds for funding this position, consultant activities and startup expenses.

City of Monroe Utilities

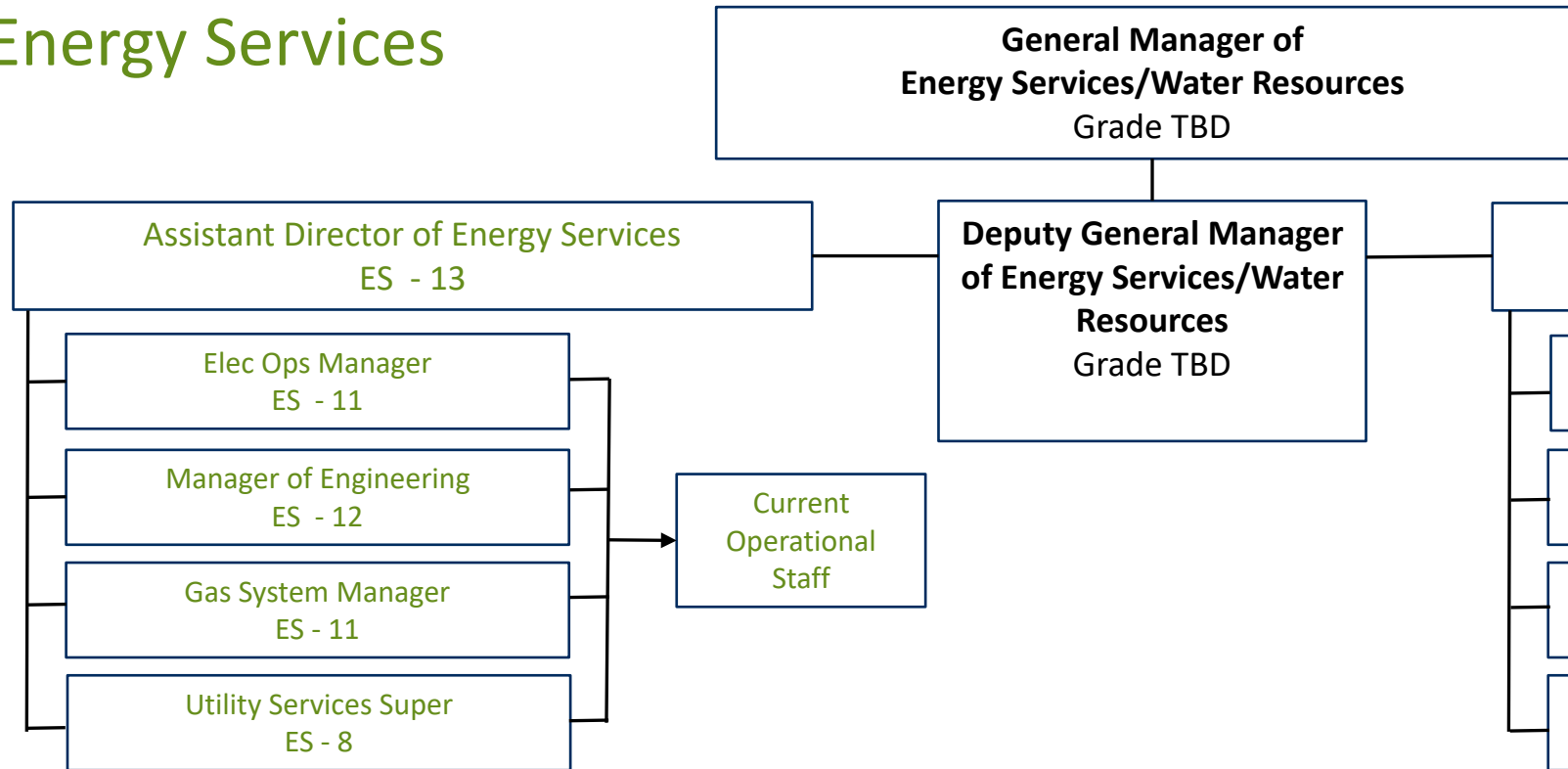
Combination of Energy Services/Water Resources

January 14, 2025



Combination of Energy Services/Water Resources

Energy Services



Energy Services

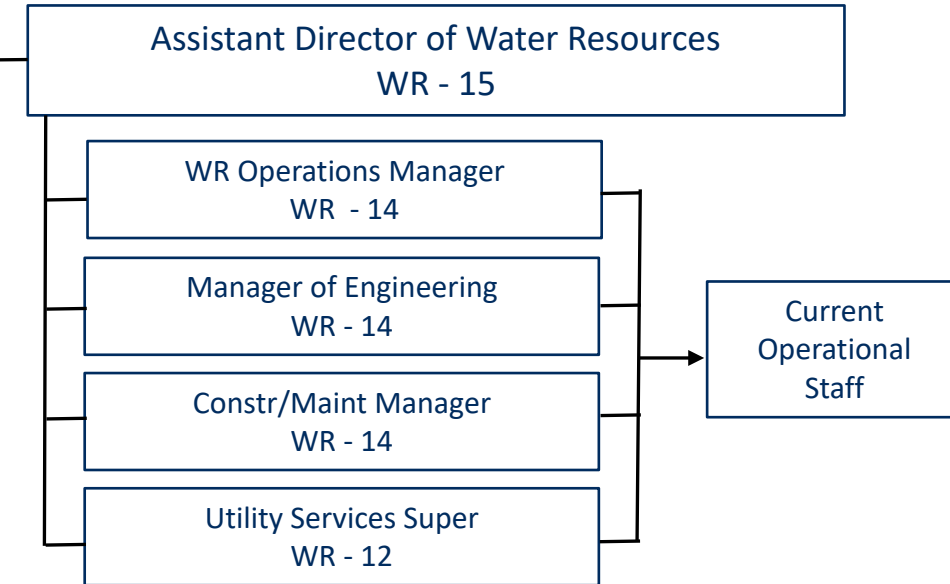
FTE = 78

Temp = 3

Annual Revenue = \$88M

Capital Assets = \$166M

Water Resources



Water Resources

FTE = 82

Temp = 4

Annual Revenue = \$30M

Capital Assets = \$132M

Recommended Action

1. Approve the combination of Energy Services and Water Resources under unified leadership
2. Reclassify Director of Energy Services to General Manager of Energy Services/Water Resources
3. Reclassify Director of Water Resources to Deputy General Manager of Energy Services/Water Resources
4. Reclassify Gas Technician IV Welder to Assistant Director of Energy Services
5. Approve City Manager approval to determine budget structure

Results

1. Fill Water Resources leadership vacancy quickly
2. Solution can be completed under current budgets
3. Consistent approach for the City providing utility services



STAFF REPORT

TO: City Council

VIA: Mark Watson, City Manager

DATE: January 14, 2025

FROM: Robert A. Burns, Mayor

PREPARED BY: Bridgette H. Robinson, City Clerk

SUBJECT: Ceremonial Keys to City of Monroe

SUMMARY STATEMENT

Discussion on the issuance of ceremonial keys to the City of Monroe.

REVIEW

This is a request to hold a discussion on the process, approval and issuance of ceremonial keys to the City of Monroe including the criteria and qualifications to receive such recognition.

RECOMMENDATION

City Council is requested to hold a discussion regarding the issuance of ceremonial keys to the City of Monroe.



STAFF REPORT

TO: City Council

VIA: Mark Watson, City Manager

DATE: January 14, 2025

FROM: Robert Burns, Mayor
Julie Thompson, Council Member

PREPARED BY: Robert Burns, Mayor

SUBJECT: Teacher Incentive Program

SUMMARY STATEMENT

Proposal to create a utility bill incentive for teachers who both live and teach in the City limits of Monroe, North Carolina.

REVIEW

This is a request to discuss establishing a program that provides financial relief to teachers residing and teaching in the City limits of Monroe by reducing their utility bills. This initiative seeks to attract and retain exceptional educators, enhance community well-being, and support the City's education system.

Monroe's ownership of its utilities allows the City to implement targeted incentives without requiring state or federal approval. This autonomy provides an opportunity to directly invest in educators who contribute significantly to the city's future prosperity.

The proposal includes the following:

1. **Program Design:**
 - **Eligibility:** Full-time teachers employed by Monroe-area schools who reside within the City limits.
 - **Incentive:** Monthly utility bill reduction for qualifying teachers.
 - Suggested starting point: 20% discount on electric, water, and sewer services.

- **Duration:** Annual enrollment, subject to periodic review for sustainability and impact.
2. **Funding Mechanism:**
- Costs could be temporarily absorbed into the city's general budget until a defined participation threshold is reached.
 - Alternatively, a minor adjustment to utility rates for non-participating residents could offset the financial impact, ensuring long-term sustainability.
3. **Implementation:**
- Collaboration with the Finance Director to conduct a detailed financial analysis, including projected costs and funding options.
 - Consultation with the Energy Services Director to assess technical and operational feasibility.
 - Engagement with the Strategic Projects Manager (Community Development) to ensure alignment with broader community development initiatives and goals.

The anticipated benefits include: improved retention and attraction of high-quality educators; strengthened ties between educators and the Monroe community; and, enhanced perception of Monroe as a City prioritizing education and community well-being.

The next steps include: Finance Department to analyze financial implications and develop a funding strategy with input from the Finance Director; Energy Services to evaluate program delivery logistics with the Energy Services Director's guidance; Community Development to provide insights into how this program aligns with housing and broader community objectives with the Strategic Projects Manager's input; and, presentation of a comprehensive plan, including funding and implementation details, for City Council review and approval.

RECOMMENDATION

City Council is request to authorize Staff to proceed with developing a detailed implementation plan for the teacher utility incentive program, incorporating input from relevant departments and stakeholders.



STAFF REPORT

TO: City Council

VIA: Mark Watson, City Manager

DATE: January 14, 2025

FROM: Robert A. Burns, Mayor

PREPARED BY: Bridgette H. Robinson, City Clerk

SUBJECT: City of Monroe Boards, Commissions and Committees Workshop

SUMMARY STATEMENT

Discussion and call for a City Council Special Meeting to hold a City of Monroe Boards, Commissions and Committees Workshop.

REVIEW

This is a request to discuss holding a City of Monroe Boards, Commissions and Committees Workshop.

RECOMMENDATION

City Council is requested to hold a discussion on hosting a City of Monroe Boards, Commissions and Committees Workshop and consider calling for a Special Meeting to be held on January 27, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. at the Dowd Center Theatre to conduct the workshop.



STAFF REPORT

TO: City Council

VIA: Mark Watson, City Manager

DATE: January 14, 2025

FROM: Mark Watson, City Manager

PREPARED BY: Bridgette H. Robinson, City Clerk

SUBJECT: Closed Session pursuant to North Carolina General Statute Sections 143-318.11(a)(1) and (a)(3) *Christopher Rowan vs. City of Monroe* and (a)(5)

SUMMARY STATEMENT

City Council is asked to approve a motion to go into Closed Session.

REVIEW

City Council is permitted to hold a Closed Session in accordance with North Carolina General Statute (N.C.G.S.) Sections 143-318.11(a)(1) to prevent the disclosure of information that is privileged or confidential pursuant to the laws of the State of North Carolina and (a)(3) to consult with the City's attorneys and (a)(5) to establish or instruct Staff concerning the negotiation of the price and terms of a contract concerning the acquisition of real property.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that City Council approve a motion to go into Closed Session pursuant to N.C.G.S. Sections 143-318.11(a)(1), (a)(3) and (a)(5).