

The Mayor and Council met for a called meeting.

- Those Present:

John Howard
Lee Malcom
Julie Sams
Charles Boyce
Myoshia Crawford
Adriane Brown
Tyler Gregory
Greg Thompson
David Dickinson
Logan Propes
Chris Bailey
Laura Powell
Paul Rosenthal
Russell Preston

Mayor
Vice-Mayor
Council Member
Council Member
Council Member
Council Member
Council Member
Council Member
Council Member
City Administrator
Assistant City Administrator
City Clerk
City Attorney
City Attorney
- Staff Present:

RV Watts, Andrew Dykes, Danny Smith, Jeremiah Still, Brad Callender, Beth Thompson, Rodney Middlebrooks, Chris Croy, Mike McGuire, Les Russell, Kaitlyn Stubbs
- Visitors:

Jean Gendall, Keith Gendall, Kim Jolly, Tara Polson, Bill Scott, Ann Hollis, Ashley Miley, Tyler Gaines, Richard Miley, Tara Tomlinson, Jadyn Tomlinson, Sarah Glick, Coleman Malcom, Kim Greenlee, Nancy Lord, Samantha Tomlinson, Horice Willis, Clayton Mathias, Shauna Mathias, Clairissa Pequignot, Joy Pequignot, Michelle Mirolli, Kelli Herrington, Joe Grizzle, David Gund, Melissa Clemons, William McDaniel, Wes Peters, Johnny Brint

I. CALL TO ORDER – JOHN HOWARD

1. Invocation
- Horice Willis, from Tabernacle Baptist Church, gave the invocation.

II. NEW BUSINESS

1. Public Hearings
- a. 2025 Millage Rate

Mayor John Howard recommended approval of millage rate and stated that due to increasing costs associated with maintaining city services, staff recommends a millage rate of 6.934. This is an increase of 0.400 mills over the calculated full rollback & only a 0.273 mills increase over the 2024 rate. This will give the City of Monroe a prospective 7.68% increase in revenues, which translates to approximately \$421,682 more than 2024 assuming 100% of collections. This is only about \$60,000 increase in the current budgeted revenues. The net maintenance and operations millage rate is 6.934 mills, and the bond millage rate is 0.00, giving a total millage rate of 6.934 mills. The five-year history of the digest with the current year’s digest and levy were properly advertised in the City’s legal organ (Walton Tribune) on July 27, 2025 and again on August 3, 2025 as well as the City of Monroe’s website. Property taxes will be billed and collected by the Walton County Tax Commissioner’s office.

Mr. Propes added that this is to keep the services in continuation, and no major changes are expected in the 2026 budget, as the City is just trying to fight the inflation and retain quality of services. The tax digest did not grow very much as we expected. There has been growth in the

City, but it did not show up in the tax digest as it moved a little over 1%. Therefore, that is why there is a slight bump in the millage rate.

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

Jean Gandell asked the question, what are we looking to do with the increase? Mayor Howard responded that 60% of the general fund budget goes towards public safety and the money collected would go towards employee salaries. Mr. Propes agreed with Mayor Howard and added that only 30% of the general fund revenue is comprised of property taxes, so, the City has a diverse revenue stream. Mr. Propes gave an example that on a \$300,000 home, one would be looking at an increase of \$32.76, per year.

Mayor Howard asked if there was anyone else that would like to speak against the tax increase.

Keith Gandell stated that he understood the millage rate, but there was another factor regarding the assessed value of property. There has been a lot of conversation about the assessed values not changing for a certain segment of homes and businesses, and one would just roll the millage rate. He does not want to get into a millage rate race due to properties not being assessed yearly. Mayor Howard mentioned that he and Mr. Propes met with county officials and went over various properties within the county and stated that some seemed to be vastly under allocated. The City asked for a re-evaluation and was told that would be up to the County and their agreement with the Tax Assessor. The City will stay on this and agrees that the assessments are off significantly, which will result in long-term reduction in millage rate for citizens that pay taxes. It is Mayor Howard's opinion that there is nothing nefarious going on, and thinks it may just be an improper use of the formula and may just not quite be the competence we require. Mr. Rosenthal added for clarification that City Council does not set the tax assessments. Properties are set by the Walton County Tax Assessor and the Board of Assessors.

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

No Action.

2. New Business


- a. To approve the 2025 Millage Rate Increase to 6.934 mills.

Mr. Dickinson stated he was prepared to make a motion but commented that we believe that the digest needs to be adjusted. County wide there are corporations that are not paying their fair share, thus, the burden is being placed on home owners and small business owners. The County needs to adjust the digest and bring tax equity. The City's bump is miniscule and he hopes people understand that compared to the County increase.

*Motion by Dickinson, seconded by Thompson.
Passed Unanimously.*

III. ADJOURN

*Motion by Sams, seconded by Thompson.
Passed Unanimously.*


MAYOR


CITY CLERK