

Ouachita Council of Governments
Regular Meeting Minutes
July 27, 2026

Members Present:	Mayor Staci Mitchell City of West Monroe	Ben Westerburg City of West Monroe
	Gretchen Ezernack City of Monroe	
	Shane Smiley Ouachita Parish Police Jury	Larry Bratton Ouachita Parish Police Jury
Staff Present:	Doug Mitchell Executive Director	Shelby Rybicki Planner II
	Ryan Emerick GIS/Planner	Jeffrey Tyler Planner II

The Ouachita Council of Governments meeting was called to order by Staci Mitchell. The meeting was held in the Council Chambers of the Monroe Government Plaza.

A roll call certified a quorum was present.

A motion was made by Ben Westerburg and seconded by Larry Bratton to approve June 22, 2026, meeting minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Shane Smiley and seconded by Larry Bratton to recess OCOG and enter into the Transportation Policy Committee. Motion carried unanimously.

Transportation Policy Committee

A motion was made by Ben Westerburg and seconded by Larry Bratton to approve the following TIP Amendment for introduction as presented by Jeffrey Tyler. Motion carried unanimously.

1. H.015660 Trenton St. Shared-Use Path
Change Utility Relocation phase from \$2.95M to \$4.8M in FFY 2026
Remove Construction phase of \$2.9M in FFY 2026

Jeffrey Tyler informed OCOG of the following TIP Administrative Modification.

1. H.015660 Trenton St. Shared-Use Path
Change Right of Way phase of \$400K to \$1.5M in FFY 2026.

A motion was made by Shane Smiley and seconded by Larry Bratton to adjourn the Transportation Policy Committee and reconvene OCOG. Motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Shane Smiley and seconded by Larry Bratton to ratify the actions of the Transportation Policy Committee. Motion carried unanimously.

Jeff Maxwell was absent and, therefore, unable to present the Budget to Actual Report. This item will be tabled for the next regular meeting of OCOG.

Ambulance Service Advisory Board

Elmer Noah provided an update from the Ambulance Service Advisory Board. The Board met on Friday, July 17, 2026, to hear presentations from the three agencies that submitted proposals for the Ouachita Parish Ambulance Service Provider contract. The proposals were scored as follows: Acadian Ambulance received the highest score, Lifeguard Ambulance ranked second, and Pafford EMS received the lowest score.

The Ambulance Service Advisory Board voted unanimously to recommend that OCOG award Acadian Ambulance a five-year contract beginning January 1, 2027. The contract will provide that, upon expiration of the initial five-year term, the agreement will automatically renew for one-year terms unless OCOG provides Acadian Ambulance with 120 days' notice of termination.

Olivia Caskey, representing Air Evac Lifeteam/GMR, declined the request to speak before OCOG as originally proposed.

Dr. Derrel Graham, a concerned citizen, challenged the Ambulance Service Advisory Board's recommendation and cited the following concerns:

- a. There is no licensed medical professional serving on the Ambulance Advisory Board.
- b. A local hospital administrator serves as on the Ambulance Advisory Board, which Dr. Graham stated presents a potential conflict of interest.
- c. The proposed consolidation of Ambulance Response Zones 2 and 3 could result in longer response times for calls originating in outlying areas of Ouachita Parish.
- d. Rapides Parish is reportedly reviewing allegations concerning inaccurate or falsified response-time data involving Acadian Ambulance.
- e. The lowest-cost proposal was not selected.

In response to concerns **a.** and **b.**, Mr. Noah explained that the current ambulance ordinance does not require a member of the Ambulance Advisory Board to be a medical doctor, nor does it require endorsement from a medical society. He noted that the Board is currently composed of representatives from the following entities:

- Fire Departments: Ouachita Parish, City of Monroe, and City of West Monroe
- Hospitals: Ochsner-LSU, St. Francis Medical Center, and Glenwood Regional Medical Center
- University: University of Louisiana at Monroe

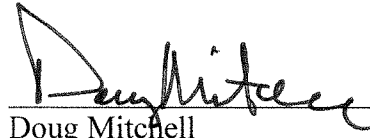
Mr. Noah stated that Dr. Graham's concerns may be influenced by potential bias, noting that Dr. Graham would have served as Medical Director for Lifeguard Ambulance had the company been awarded the contract.

Shane Smiley acknowledged the lengthy and challenging RFP process and expressed his appreciation to everyone involved.

There were no further comments.

A motion was made by Shane Smiley and seconded by Ben Westerburg to award the Ouachita Parish Ambulance Service Provider contract to Acadian Ambulance, as recommended by the Ambulance Service Advisory Board. Staci Mitchell abstained from the vote. The contract term is five years.

There being no other business, a motion was made by Shane Smiley and seconded by Larry Bratton to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously.



Doug Mitchell
Executive Director, OCOG

Date 8/25/26



OUACHITA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Monroe

West Monroe

Ouachita Parish

3000 KILPATRICK BLVD • MONROE, LOUISIANA 71201

OUACHITA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
MONROE GOVERNMENT PLAZA
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
JULY 27, 2026
NOON

AGENDA

CALL TO ORDER

ROLL CALL

APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES

Action Item

RECESS OCOG

Action Item

TRANSPORTATION POLICY COMMITTEE

A. TIP AMENDMENT – INTRODUCE

Action Item

1. H.015660 Trenton Street Shared-Use Path

RECONVENE OCOG & RATIFY ACTIONS OF TRANSPORTATION POLICY COMMITTEE

Action Item

BUDGET TO ACTUAL REPORT

Action Item

AMBULANCE SERVICE ADVISORY BOARD

AIR EVAC LIFETEAM / GMR

Ms. Olivia Caskey

SELECT OUACHITA PARISH AMBULANCE SERVICE PROVIDER

Action Item

OTHER BUSINESS

ADJOURNMENT

HOMELAND SECURITY AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS REPORT

An Equal Opportunity Employer

* Amendment

MONROE									
Project: H.015660 TRENTON STREET SHARED-USE PATH									
Request Type: Amendment									
Request: Change Utility Relocation phase from \$2.95M of DEMO at 80/20 in FFY 2026 to \$4.8M of DEMO at 80/20 in FFY 2026									
Request: Remove Construction phase of \$2.9M of DEMO at 80/20 in FFY 2026 (phase is moving outside current STIP years)									
Route:		Cntrl Section: 000-37		Seg. Log Mile: 3		End Log Mile: 0		Parish: 0	
Urbanized Area: Monroe						OUACHITA		Non-State Rpt: TRENTON ST	
Remarks		Type Improvement				Work Type			
CITY OF WEST MONROE TO PROVIDE MATCH		SHARED-USE PATH				DEMO / HIGH PRIORITY			
Project Phase		Project Cost		Tot Cost (w/CE&I+IDC)		Federal Share		Fund	
Utility Relocation		\$4,800,000.00		\$4,800,000.00		\$3,840,000.00		DEMO	
Construction		\$0.00		\$0.00		\$0.00			
by phases shown above)		\$4,800,000.00		\$4,800,000.00		\$3,840,000.00			
								Year	
								2026	
								Sponsor	

*Modification

MONROE									
Project: H.015660 TRENTON STREET SHARED-USE PATH									
Request Type: Administrative Modification									
Request: Change Right of Way phase of \$400K of DEMO at 80/20 in FFY 2026 to \$1.5M of DEMO at 80/20 in FFY 2026									
Route:		Cntrl Section: 000-37		3eg. Log Mile:		0 End Log Mile:		0 Parish:	
Urbanized Area: Monroe						OUACHITA		Non-State Ro. TRENTON ST	
Remarks		Type Improvement		Work Type					
CITY OF WEST MONROE TO PROVIDE MATCH		SHARED-USE PATH		DEMO / HIGH PRIORITY					
Project Phase		Project Cost		Tot Cost (w/CE&I+DC)		Federal Share		Fund	
Right of Way		\$1,500,000.00		\$1,500,000.00		\$1,200,000.00		DEMO	
Total Cost (includes only phases shown above)		\$1,500,000.00		\$1,500,000.00		\$1,200,000.00		Year	
								2026	
								Sponsor	
								City of West Monroe	

DATE: **July 27, 2026**

ROLL CALL

	MEMBERS	PHONE #	EMAIL	PRESENT	ABSENT
✓	Mayor Staci Mitchell	318-396-2600	smitchell@westmonroe.la.gov	✓	
✓	Mayor Friday Ellis	318-329-2227	friday.ellis@ci.monroe.la.us		✓
✓	Mr. Shane Smiley	318-267-8659	ssmiley@oppj.org	✓	
✓	Mr. Ben Westerburg	318-366-4488	bwesterburg@westmonroe.la.gov	✓	
✓	Ms. Gretchen Ezernack	318-366-1675	gretchen.ezernack@ci.monroe.la.us	✓	
✓	Mr. Larry Bratton	318-614-3370	larrybratton2019@gmail.com	✓	

OUACHITA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS MEETING
MONROE CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

JULY 27, 2026

12 NOON

PLEASE SIGN IN:

(Print Please)

NAME	AGENCY REPRESENTING
Sha Bradish Jones	Monroe Fire
Daniel D. Overton	WMFD
Jamie Hanks	OPPT
Olivia Caskey	Air Evac
Emily Sullivan	Citizen
Robert Sawyer	EMR
Demul GRAHAM	Citizen
Demetri Johnson	QA/OPPT
Tommy Elmore	Monroe Chamber

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AFFIDAVIT OF PUBLICATION

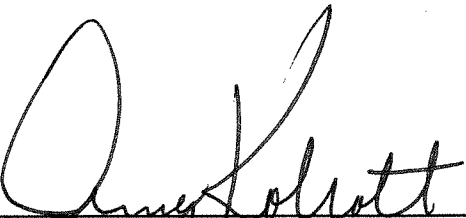
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Monroe LA 71201

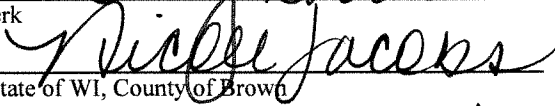
STATE OF WISCONSIN, COUNTY OF BROWN

The News Star, a daily newspaper published in the city of Monroe, in the Parish of Ouachita, State of Louisiana, and personal knowledge of the facts herein state and that the notice hereto annexed was Published in said newspapers in the issue:

MON Monroe News Star 07/16/2026
MON thenewsstar.com 07/16/2026

and that the fees charged are legal.
Sworn to and subscribed before on 07/16/2026



Legal Clerk


Notary, State of WI, County of Brown
8-21-26

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Notary Public
State of Wisconsin

OCOOG Meeting Notice

The regular meeting of the Ouachita Council of Governments is scheduled for Monday, July 27, 2026, at noon in the Monroe Government Plaza Council Chambers.

July 16 2026

LLOU0556600