

Monroe County Board of Commissioners

Minutes of the April 12, 2024

Regular Commissioners Meeting

8:00 A.M.

Present:

Greg Tapley, Chairman

Eddie Rowland, Vice-Chairman

Lamarcus Davis, District 1

John Ambrose, District 3

George Emami, District 4

Staff:

Ben Vaughn, County Attorney

Jim Hedges, County Manager

Janet Abbott, County Clerk

Richard Dumas, Public Information Officer

Kelsey Fortner, Community Development Manager

Welcome

Chairman Tapley welcomed everyone in attendance.

Prayer

Commissioner Davis gave the invocation.

Pledge

Commissioner Davis led the Pledge.

Roll Call

County Clerk Janet Abbott called roll.

Call to Order

Chairman Tapley called the meeting to order at 8:00 A.M.

New Business

Approve Agenda

Chairman Tapley presented the agenda for approval with the addition of Grey Stone Subdivision as item F.

Commissioner Davis motioned to approve the agenda with said changes.

Commissioner Ambrose seconded the motion, and the motion was carried 5-0.

2026-2031 SPLOST

County Manager Jim Hedges stated the object of the called meeting is to finalize the projects that will be included in the 2026-2031 SPLOST program. As information, the projects presented to the Board of Commissioners on March 19, 2024, were developed by the County Department Heads, reviewed, and adjusted by the County Manager, based on projected needs within their department.

County Manager Jim Hedges stated the SPLOST, which would run for six years from 2026-2031, would generate just under \$33.3 million in revenues for Monroe County. The City of Forsyth would receive just over \$6 million, and the City of Culloden would receive \$417,128.

The summary of the SPLOST projects proposed are as follows:

- Water Projects \$2,000,000
- Roads \$3,900,000
- Buildings \$6,320,000
- Rolling Stock \$9,450,000
- Miscellaneous \$2,600,700
- Recreation \$9,008,200
- Total \$33,278,900

County Department Heads present for the discussion are as follows:

- Recreation Director Landon Sparks
- Public Works Director Kim Stokes
- Sheriff Brad Freeman
- Colonel Mike Hull
- Road Superintendent Gary Futch
- H2O Jeff Dorough
- Landfill Director Frank Newton
- Solid Waste Coordinator Nathan Dumas
- Animal Shelter Manager Becky Gifford

- EMS Chief Matt Jackson
- Community Development Manager Kelsey Fortner
- Assistant County Manager/Finance Director Lorri Robinson
- Vehicle Maintenance Manager Joey Pitman

County Manager Jim Hedges and Finance Director Lorri Robinson proposed the projects for SPLOST.

Following an in-depth discussion on the projects being proposed, Commissioner Emami suggested postponing a vote on the final project list until the Commissioners could get more feedback from their constituents.

Monroe County citizens will vote in a county wide referendum on Tuesday, November 5th on whether to renew the SPLOST.

Subdivision Interior Roads

Commissioner John Ambrose requested a discussion on subdivision interior roads.

Commissioner Ambrose stated he wants to revisit where a major subdivision should be required to build an interior road. Commissioner Ambrose stated the subdivision approved for Steve Coleman on Giles Road should have forced an interior road, regardless of the lot size.

Following a Board discussion, no action was taken.

RV Exemption

County Manager Jim Hedges stated in March, emails were received from Ms. Christine Case, a 74-year-old lady living on Social Security, living in an RV with septic and water, but her lot is .39 acre. She attached several photos and the majority of the Commissioners stated they would exempt Ms. Case given that her lot was exceptionally clean and impressive. That led to a number of Commissioners indicating a need to have some form of exception policy. Mr. Hedges stated he drafted such a policy, and it was well received by the Commissioners, and unfortunately, County Attorney Ben Vaughn was in disagreement with a few of the suggestions. That led to the April 1st deadline for compliance of the UDO to be delayed and the request from some of the Commissioners to have an agenda item to discuss RV Exemptions.

The Board discussed various reasons for RV Exemptions and suggested postponing the enforcement of the RV code until more guidelines could be established.

County Attorney Ben Vaughn stated he could incorporate the Boards suggestions into the UDO but would need more time to research and his opinion was whatever is in the code needs to be enforced.

Chairman Tapley stated the Board wants a workable solution that can be enforced as quickly as possible, but it needs to be fair and humane.

Following further discussion, the Board told Code Enforcement Officer Deputy Jeff Wilson to continue the eviction process with RVs that did not have septic systems or water. They asked him to hold off on RVs that did not have sufficient lot sizes until the UDO could be updated.

County Attorney Vaughn stated he would bring back the revisions for further discussion at the May 7th meeting.

Planning & Zoning Board

Commissioner Ambrose requested a discussion on the Planning and Zoning board. Commissioner Ambrose stated he believes the P & Z Board should be removed and the Board of Commissioners hear requests and give no or yes at the following meeting, that way pros and cons people only come once.

Following a Board discussion, Commissioner Ambrose motioned to eliminate the Planning and Zoning Board and allow all applications to come before the Board of Commissioners and for the Board to decide two weeks later.

County Attorney Ben Vaughn stated if this is what the Board decides the changes would need to be made to the UDO and advertised.

Commissioner Rowland seconded the motion for discussion.

Commissioner Rowland stated there was more discussion that needed to be had before this decision was made. Following further discussion, Commissioner Ambrose withdrew his motion and motioned to keep the P & Z Board and to appoint a member for the vacant position but to allow the Board of Commissioners two additional weeks before a decision is made.

The Board discussed further in depth and Commissioner Ambrose withdrew his motion and the Board agreed by general consensus to table for further investigation.

Greystone

Commissioner Emami proposed asking the residents of Greystone Subdivision to be part of a special tax district to fix stormwater flooding issues in the subdivision. Commissioner Emami stated the property owners could pay additional taxes that would go towards the county fixing the flooding problems within the subdivision.

Public Works Director Kim Stokes stated he has not been able to locate the original construction plans, but he estimates the cost to fix the roads and drainage problem to be between 2.5 million and 5 million.

Chairman Tapley stated the developer should be responsible for the repairs.

Mr. Stokes stated the developer, and the original engineer are both deceased.

Mr. Stokes stated the first step would be for the residents to pay for an engineering study.

Following a Board discussion, the Board instructed Mr. Stokes to notify the residents of Greystone Subdivision of the need to obtain an engineering study.

Public Comments

Bronwen Morgan stated the Upson County code was used for the UDO was specifically designed to eliminate legal RV living. She stated she feels as though this is a bait and switch from what was previously approved by the Board.

Commissioners' Comments

Commissioner Lamarcus Davis

Commissioner Davis stated he felt this was a productive meeting.

Commissioner Eddie Rowland

Commissioner Rowland had no additional comments.

Commissioner John Ambrose

Commissioner Ambrose had no additional comments.

Commissioner George Emami

Commissioner Emami stated he would like to respond to Ms. Morgan's comment. He stated the discussion is not to implement the entire Upson Code, just the portion that pertains to properties under 3 acres as a non-conforming use.

Chairman Greg Tapley

Chairman Tapley had no additional comments.

Executive Session-Real Estate

Commissioner Davis motioned to enter executive session at 10:26 a.m.

Commissioner Ambrose seconded the motion, and the motion was carried 5-0.

Commissioner Emami motioned to come out of executive session at 10:40 a.m.

Commissioner Davis seconded the motion, and the motion was carried 5-0.

Action from Executive Session.

County Attorney Ben Vaughn stated a real estate matter was discussed in executive session and no action was taken.

Adjourn

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to adjourn at 10:42 a.m.

Commissioner Davis seconded the motion, and the motion passed 5-0.

Respectively Submitted by:

Janet Abbott, County Clerk