

Monroe County Board of Commissioners

Minutes of the May 07, 2024

Regular Commissioners Meeting

6:00 P.M.

Present:

Greg Tapley, Chairman-Not Present

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

Vice-Chairman Rowland welcomed everyone in attendance.

Prayer

Reverend Cleveland Jarrell pastor of Greater Friendship Baptist Church gave the invocation.

Pledge

Vice-Chairman Rowland led the Pledge.

Roll Call

County Clerk Janet Abbott called roll.

Call to Order

Vice-Chairman Rowland called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

County Excellence Award

Monroe County was awarded the 2024 County Excellence Award on April 27, 2025, at the ACCG annual conference. Monroe County received the award for the creation of the Monroe Champions all-abilities baseball league.

Commissioner Rowland stated it was an honor to accept this on behalf of Monroe County.

Keith Edge spoke regarding the award for Monroe Champions. Mr. Edge stated the league would not have been possible without God and the support of a lot of people in Monroe County.

Recreation Director Landon Sparks along with several of the Monroe Champions players and their parents were present on behalf of the award.

New Business

Approve Agenda

Vice-Chairman Rowland presented the agenda for approval.

Commissioner Davis motioned to approve the agenda as presented.

Commissioner Emami seconded the motion, and the motion passed 4-0.

Approve Minutes-BOC Meeting-April 12, 2024, Called Meeting and the April 16, 2024, Regular Meeting

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to approve the minutes of the April 12, 2024, Called Meeting and the April 16, 2024, Regular Meeting with the normal 30 days for changes.

Commissioner Davis seconded the motion, and the motion passed 4-0.

Probate Software

Judge Donna Robins recommends replacement of existing software used in the Probate Department with i3 Verticals, an integrated payment and software solution that generates maximum revenue in payment processing and online payments. In addition, Judge Robins requested approval to add a full-time employee given the increase in workload, specifically in processing of citations which is now exceeding 1,000 citations per month.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to approve the software request and the request for an additional full-time employee.

Commissioner Davis seconded the motion and the motion carried 4-0.

2026-2031 SPLOST

County Manager Jim Hedges stated the object of the called meeting on April 12, 2024, was 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. The revised 2026-2031

SPLOST projects increased funding for water projects, eliminated funding for roads which will be funded with TSPLOST funds, and reduced the cost of the covered horse arena.

The approval of the 2026-2031 SPLOST projects was tabled pending input from constituents on the project proposals. The 40-minute discussion was detailed by Richard Dumas and posted on the Monroe County Facebook page. The posting received “4 Likes” and 51 Comments. The 51 Comments were posted by 16 individuals.

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 proposed SPLOST projects are as follows:

- Water Projects \$7,400,000
- Roads \$0
- Buildings \$6,320,000
- Rolling Stock \$9,450,000
- Miscellaneous Equipment \$2,600,700
- Recreation \$7,508,200
- Projected Collections \$33,278,900

County Manager Jim Hedges stated the next steps are as follows:

- Monroe BOC Approval
- Joint Intergovernmental Agreement Meeting with Municipalities-May 23, 2024
- Monroe BOC Resolution-Call for Election-June 18, 2024
- Monroe BOC-Notice of Election to Monroe County Board of Elections and Registrar-August 7, 2024

The way forward is to motion to approve the 2026-2031 SPLOST Renewal Projects, and call for the Joint Intergovernmental Agreement Meeting with the Monroe Municipalities on May 23, 2024.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to approve the 2026-2031 SPLOST Renewal Projects and to call for the Joint Intergovernmental Agreement Meeting with the Monroe Municipalities on May 23, 2024.

Commissioner Davis seconded the motion for discussion.

Commissioner Rowland stated he wanted to make sure everyone knew the covered arena is still being planned for.

Commissioner Ambrose stated this is not a new SPLOST, but a continuation of the current SPLOST and the money is needed to continue the projects.

Commissioner Davis stated one county voted their SPLOST out and 6 months later the citizens were trying to vote back it back in. SPLOST is the only way to keep our county going and the money is dedicated to the projects specified.

Commissioner Ambrose asked if more money comes in than what is allocated, could it be added to the General Fund.

County Manager Jim Hedges stated new categories cannot be created but it could be spent in the same category. He stated one thing that is currently being looked at is whether the excess funds can be used to pay general obligation debt.

The motion passed 4-0.

P&Z Hearing-Brock-Edwards Road

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to enter a public hearing at 6:23 pm for a rezoning request from A-R to R-2 located at 343 Edwards Road, Map 076 Parcel 002B.

Commissioner Davis seconded the motion and the motion carried 4-0.

Community Development Manager Kelsey Fortner presented a rezoning request located at 343 Edwards Road, Juliette, Ga Map 076 Parcel 002B. Mrs. Fortner stated the property owner requests to subdivide 1.5 acre(s) out of a 64.57-acre tract and sale. The minimum in R-2 is one-acre versus a three-acre minimum in A-R. The property owner/applicant is Eric Brock.

The Planning and Zoning Board recommended approval.

No one was present in opposition.

The applicant was present on behalf of the application.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to come out of the public hearing at 6:28 p.m.

Commissioner Davis seconded the motion and the motion carried 4-0.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to approve the application.

Commissioner Emami seconded the motion carried 4-0.

P&Z Hearing-Brown/Maddix-Brownlee Road

Commissioner Davis motioned to enter a public hearing at 6:29 p.m. for a Variance request for a 7-acre tract to be split located at 3314 Brownlee Road, Map 036 Parcel 021A.

Commissioner Ambrose seconded the motion and the motion carried 4-0.

Community Development Manager Kelsey Fortner presented a Variance request for a 7-acre tract to be split. Mrs. Fortner stated there is sufficient acreage but less than minimum road frontage. The minimum is 200' per lot and this road frontage is approximately 208.96' according to a survey conducted by IronStone Surveying. Mrs. Fortner stated the request would be a variance for the road frontage, and afterwards should it be approved,

they will use an easement on the south side of the parcel. The property owner/applicants are Jeremiah Brown and Gerald Ricky Maddox.

The Planning and Zoning Board recommended approval.

No one was present in opposition.

The applicant was present on behalf of the application.

Commissioner Emami motioned to come out of the public hearing at 6:33 p.m.

Commissioner Ambrose seconded the motion and the motion carried 4-0.

Commissioner Emami motioned to approve with the condition the county receive a copy of the 60-foot driveway easement.

Commissioner Ambrose seconded the motion and the motion carried 4-0.

P&Z Board Appointment

Commissioner Emami motioned to nominate Jason Dorsey to fill Chad Tylers vacancy on the Planning and Zoning Board.

Commissioner Davis seconded the motion and the motion carried 4-0.

Public Comments

Jan Knect, resident of Boxankle Road, addressed the Board asking the Board to expand county recreation opportunities. Ms. Knect stated she wishes that some of the money in the SPLOST could be used for recreation in the northern part of the county instead of it all being allocated to the Recreation Department.

Ms. Knect stated she does not agree with the proposed burn building being placed at the Legion Hall in High Falls. Ms. Knect stated when it was donated to the county it was intended to be used for recreational purposes.

Commissioner Lamarcus Davis

Commissioner Davis urged citizens to continue to sign up for SeeClickFix.

Commissioner Eddie Rowland

Commissioner Rowland urged residents to vote on May 7th in the primary. Commissioner Rowland thanked all the candidates that are running for office for giving the citizens a choice.

Commissioner John Ambrose

Commissioner Ambrose told Commissioner Rowland he did an outstanding job chairing the meeting. He also wished Public Information Officer Richard Dumas a Happy Birthday. Commissioner Ambrose urged Commissioner Emami to withdraw his resignation.

Commissioner George Emami

Commissioner Emami thanked Commissioner Ambrose for his sentiments and stated he is grateful for what he has learned during his time as a commissioner.

Chairman Greg Tapley

Chairman Tapley was not present.

Executive Session-Litigation Real Estate

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to enter executive session for litigation at 7:06 p.m.

Commissioner Davis seconded the motion and the motion carried 4-0.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to come out of executive session at 7:24 p.m.

Commissioner Davis seconded the motion and the motion carried 4-0.

Action from Executive Session.

County Attorney Ben Vaughn stated two litigation matters and a real estate matter were discussed during executive session, but no action was taken.

Adjourn

Commissioner Davis motioned to adjourn at 7:26 p.m.

Commissioner Emami seconded the motion, and the motion passed 4-0.

Respectively Submitted by:

Janet Abbott, County Clerk