

Monroe County Board of Commissioners

Minutes of the January 13, 2022

Regular Commissioners Meeting

9:00 A.M. Meeting

Regular meeting rescheduled from January 18, 2022

Present:

Greg Tapley, Chairman

Lamarcus Davis, Vice Chairman

Eddie Rowland, District 2

John Ambrose, District 3

George Emami, District 4-Entered at 9:04 A.M.

Staff:

Jim Hedges, County Manager

Ben Vaughn, County Attorney

Janet Abbott, County Clerk

Richard Dumas, Public Information Officer

Kelsey Fortner, Zoning Officer

Welcome

Chairman Tapley welcomed everyone in attendance.

Prayer

Commissioner Rowland led the invocation.

Pledge

Chairman Tapley led the Pledge.

Roll Call

County Clerk Janet Abbott called roll.

Call to Order

Chairman Tapley called the meeting to order at 9:00 A.M.

Speaker Appearance-Ralph Bass/Gilda Stanberry

Ralph Bass spoke to the Board regarding the Bicentennial Celebration. Mr. Bass gave a final update on the Bicentennial Festival's operations and events.

Gilda Stanberry shared publications from the Bicentennial Celebration.

Commissioner Emami entered at 9:04 A.M.

New Business

Approve Agenda

Chairman Tapley presented the agenda for approval with the removal of the five-year permit for the Landfill.

Commissioner Davis motioned to approve the agenda with said changes.

Commissioner Rowland seconded the motion and the motion carried 5-0.

Approve Minutes-BOC Meeting-January 04, 2022

Commissioner Emami motioned to approve the minutes of the January 04, 2022, Regular meeting with the usual 30 days for changes.

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

Property Tax Due Date

Tax Commissioner Lori Andrews recommends moving the due date on Ad Valorem property taxes from December 20th of each year to an earlier date. Under O.C.G.A Section 48-5-150, the Board of Commissioners, with the consent of the Tax Commissioner, by resolution can change the due date for Ad Valorem property tax from December 20th to either November 15th or December 1st.

The Board discussed the different ramifications from changing the date and how it affects the County's operations if the date is moved earlier.

Following a Board discussion, Commissioner Ambrose motioned to move the due date to November 15th.

Commissioner Emami seconded the motion and the motion carried 5-0

Landfill 5-Year Permit (Public Hearing)

This item was removed from the agenda.

2022 Qualifying Fee

County Manager Jim Hedges stated by law, the Board of Commissioners are required to establish Qualifying Fees by February 1, 2022, for the 2022 Elections. The fee is 3% base salary excluding cost-of-living increases, training supplements, and longevity increases. The base salary for a Monroe County Commissioner is \$15,000; so, the Qualifying Fee at 3% will be \$450.00.

Mr. Hedges stated a resolution is required and is required to be published in the legal organ. The Qualifying fees established will be for the position of "Commissioner and the Board of Education.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to set the 2022 Qualifying Fee for the position of Monroe County Commissioner at \$450.00; and for the Board of Education at \$45.00 and to approve the resolution.

Commissioner Rowland seconded the motion and the motion carried 5-0.

Alcohol License (Ownership Change)

Sunoco located at 4988 High Falls Road is under the new ownership of Ashish Patel and must change the alcohol license into his name. This action requires Board approval.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to approve.

Commissioner Rowland seconded the motion and the motion carried 5-0.

Water Tap Fee

The Board of Commissioners have agreed that water tap fees associated with existing structures on new water lines, if application is made within six months of project completion be reduced as follows:

- 3/4" from \$1200 to \$600
- 1" from \$1200 to \$600

This assumes contractor has already made a tap to the water main and run the poly pipe to the right of way.

The issue is new construction along the route of new water main installation requiring the county to perform the main tap and run poly pipe to the customer along with meter and backflow valve, and boring in some cases, plus the normal meter installation.

Recommended rates for new customers are as follows:

	Price ¾ inch	Price 1 inch	Price 1 ½	Price 2 inch
No Bore	\$794.81	\$987.23	\$2,294.45	\$3,045.86
Recommended	\$800.00	\$1,000.00	\$2,300.00	\$3,100.00
Bore	\$1,519.81	\$1,712.23	\$3,019.45	\$3,770.86
Recommended	\$1,600.00	\$1,800.00	\$3,100.00	\$3,800.00

The recommendation is for the discounts to remain for existing structures along new water main infrastructure and the new rates to apply to new customers where the County is required to perform the water main tap and run the poly line, plus the installation of water meter.

Following a Board discussion, Commissioner Emami motioned to set the fees for new taps where the line is already in the ground as follows:

- ¾ in \$1,200.00
- 1 in. \$1,400.00
- 1 ½ in. \$2,700.00
- 2 in \$3,450.00

And for any new building permits obtained for new construction the applicant will pay the normal tap fees with no discounts starting immediately.

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

Tractor Purchase

On December 13, 2021, the Public Works 2019 New Holland tractor caught fire and was declared a total loss; however, the boom mower is salvageable and will be sold at auction on GovDeals. Based on the scene examination and information available, it is the opinion of Investigator David Brown that the fire originated in the rear of the motor, under the operators control panel and cab. The fire was classified as undetermined and accidental.

This is a critical piece of equipment for Public Works and needs to be replaced. Junior Watts has surveyed the market and the only available tractor and boom mower currently available is a Massey Ferguson at a cost \$165,980 from Atlantic Southern out of Lake City, Georgia. Insurance proceeds are \$60,000 and the balance of \$105,980 was reserved in 2021 from available funds in the Public Works operational budget.

County Manager Jim Hedges stated the recommendation is to proceed with the purchase of the Massey Ferguson that is currently available.

Commissioner Emami motioned to approve the purchase of the Massey Ferguson at a cost of \$165,980 from Atlantic Southern of Lake City, Georgia.

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

Grapple Truck Purchase

County Manager Jim Hedges addressed the Board stating, in November 2021, and extending into December 2021, the grapple truck assigned to the Recycling Centers had several mechanical issues and was out-of-service for several weeks. During this period, there was significant backup of trash, and it was the consensus of the Commissioners that a second, or back-up grapple truck was needed.

Mr. Hedges stated like everything else these days, availability of a grapple truck is 6-8 months. However, Road Superintendent Junior Watts has located a tandem axle with 45 cubic yard body that is available within 30 days at a cost of \$209,700. Funding would either come from contingency or reserves.

Mr. Hedges stated this is just a discussion and he is not recommending purchasing a new grapple truck at this time.

The Board discussed the need for an additional grapple truck.

Golf Cart Ordinance (Discussion)

County Attorney Ben Vaughn presented an Ordinance of the Board of Commissioners of Monroe County, Georgia providing for personal transportation and other vehicles.

Mr. Vaughn stated Georgia Code O.C.G.A 40-6-363 states “The purpose of this part shall be to authorize any local authority to establish a personal transportation vehicle transportation plan for roadways and streets within the local authority’s jurisdiction. It is the intent of the General Assembly that these plans be designed and developed to best serve the functional travel needs of the jurisdiction and to have the physical safety of the personal transportation vehicle occupants and their property as a major planning component. No local authority shall be liable for losses resulting from exercising or not exercising its authority to adopt a personal transportation vehicle transportation plan, failing to adopt such plan, making an inadequate plan, or negligently adopting such plan”.

Mr. Vaughn further stated the definition in the Georgia Code of a *Personal Transportation Vehicle* is as follows:

- a) With a minimum of four wheels.
- b) Capable of a maximum level ground speed of less than 20 miles per hour.
- c) With a maximum gross vehicle unladen or empty weight of 1375 pounds; and
- d) Capable of transporting not more than eight persons.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to approve the ordinance and make changes as needed.

Commissioner Emami seconded for discussion.

Following a Board discussion with Sheriff Brad Freeman’s input, Commissioner Ambrose withdrew his motion and Commissioner Emami withdrew his second.

Old Business

Subdivision Moratorium

County Attorney Ben Vaughn presented the next item on the agenda stating the Subdivision Moratorium passed by the Board on October 19, 2021, was set to expire on January 18, 2022. Mr. Vaughn asked the Board if they would like for the moratorium to expire or if they wanted to extend it.

Following a Board discussion, Commissioner Ambrose motioned to extend the moratorium until May 1, 2022.

Commissioner Emami seconded the motion and the motion carried 4-1, with Chairman Tapley opposed.

Construction Board of Adjustments and Appeals

Article IV-Administration and Enforcement, Section 5-56 of the Monroe County Code provides for the Construction Board of Adjustments and Appeals and was adopted by the Board of Commissioners on December 3, 2004. Basically, this ordinance provides administrative procedures for the enforcement of the state minimum standard codes for construction. There were four appointees and their terms all expired on December 19, 2019. Mr. Hedges stated he spoke with one of the appointees, and he had no knowledge of being appointed to this Board and further state he was unaware of any Board meetings. Additionally, current employees Emily Parks,

Mark Goolsby, and Kelsey Fortner have stated this board only meets if there are major “issues”, and no one can remember this board ever meeting.

County Attorney Ben Vaughn has opined this section of the Code should not be removed and the Board should be reactivated.

Mr. Hedges stated his recommendation is to maintain the code and to reactivate the Board.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to reactivate the Board.

Commissioner Rowland seconded the motion and the motion carried 5-0.

Property Maintenance

County Manager Jim Hedges presented the next item stating, both Commissioner’s Ambrose and Emami have recently requested the implementation of a Property Maintenance Ordinance. Mr. Hedges stated in 2019, a Property Maintenance Ordinance was brought before the Board, discussed and tabled. The International Code Council has issued an International Property Maintenance Code and Code Enforcement Officer Jeff Wilson has reviewed this code in its entirety and crossed-out a number of sections he believes are not applicable to Monroe County.

Mr. Hedges stated the way forward is for the Board to review and provide comments on additions or deletions and for the County Attorney to draft a Property Maintenance Code Ordinance. Mr. Hedges stated the agenda item as a first reader and public hearing will be on February 15, 2022, and the second reading and public hearing will be March 1, 2022.

Following an extensive Board discussion, Commissioner Emami motioned to approve the ordinance as is and for the Board to make changes as needed.

Commissioner Ambrose seconded the motion and the motion carried 4-1 with Commissioner Rowland opposed. The Board further discussed the Property Maintenance Ordinance in detail and Commissioner Emami motioned to rescind the approval of the Property Maintenance Ordinance.

Commissioner Ambrose seconded his motion and the motion carried 5-0.

Commissioners’ Comments

Commissioner Davis asked if the community service workers were able to start back cleaning the sides of the road. Commissioner Rowland replied they had stopped due to Covid but had recently started back.

Commissioner Ambrose stated people are leaving trash at the property at Popes Ferry and something needed to be done.

Commissioner Rowland asked who the point of contact for the new appointee on the Board of Health would be. Commissioner Davis replied that it was Gina Smith.

Commissioner Ambrose stated the new appointee to the Hospital Board has resigned and he thinks there should be new bylaws created for the Hospital Board.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Executive Session (Legal)

Commissioner Rowland motioned to move into executive session for Legal at 10:52 a.m.

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

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to move out of executive session at 11:01 a.m.

Commissioner Emami seconded the motion and the motion carried 5-0.

Action from Executive Session

There was no action from executive session.

Adjourn

Commissioner Emami motioned to adjourn at 11:02 a.m.

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

Respectively Submitted by:

County Clerk, Janet Abbott