

Monroe County Board of Commissioners

Minutes of the September 20, 2022

Regular Commissioners Meeting

9:00 A.M. Meeting

Present:

Greg Tapley, Chairman-Not Present

Lamarcus Davis, Vice Chairman

Eddie Rowland, District 2

John Ambrose, District 3

George Emami, District 4

Staff:

Jim Hedges, County Manager

Ben Vaughn, County Attorney

Janet Abbott, County Clerk

Kelsey Fortner, Community Development Manager

Richard Dumas, Public Information Officer

Lorri Robinson, Finance Director

Candice Baswell, Conference Center Manager

Landon Sparks, Recreation Director

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.

New Business

Approve Agenda

Commissioner Davis presented the agenda for approval with the removal of item O from the agenda.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to approve the agenda with said changes.

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

Approve Minutes-BOC Meeting-September 06, 2022, Regular Meeting

Commissioner Rowland motioned to approve the minutes of the September 06, 2022, Regular meeting with the usual 30 days for changes.

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

Sheriffs Vehicles Purchase Order

County Manager Jim Hedges stated when it comes to purchasing vehicles, ambulances, moto-graders, etc., the manufacturer is telling us, issue a Purchase Order and we will deliver the product next year. The Sheriff has recently learned that General Motors, the manufacturer of the Dodge Charger Police vehicle is extending the production of this vehicle for one additional year. This vehicle is the primary vehicle used by the Monroe County Sheriff's office.

Monroe County Sheriff Brad Freeman stated the manufacturer requires a Purchase Order prior to putting the vehicles into production with delivery next year; not much different that the recent authorization for the purchase of two ambulances.

Sheriff Freeman requests approval from the Board of Commissioners to put forward a purchase order for 14 Dodge Charger Police RWD vehicles at a discounted price of \$38,435 for a total of \$538,090. Additionally, there is \$275,000 in the 2020 SPLOST fund for Sheriff vehicles.

Finance Officer Lorri Robinson stated these vehicles are four next years budget, if the purchase is agreed to today it would be for next year's budget, she continued with the purchase orders just must be issued now.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to approve the purchase of 14 Dodge Charger Police vehicles.

Commissioner Emami seconded for discussion.

Commissioner Ambrose stated the Sheriff's Office is different from any other department and he would like to make sure the Sheriff's Office has what they need to keep the community safe.

Sheriff Freeman stated even if we issue the purchase orders today, the county won't receive them until maybe February.

The motion carried 4-0.

2022 Revised LMIG Projects

County Manager Jim Hedges stated at the August 16, 2022, Board of Commissioners meeting, the bid results of the 2022 LMIG grant were reviewed with costs escalating to \$450,000 per mile, an increase of 110%. The Board's instructions were to amend the LMIG list, obtain the GDOT approval of the revised list, and to amend the scope and obtain revised costs for the amended LMIG list.

Kim Stokes amended the LMIG list to include Montpelier Station Road, and Jenkins Road, and the amendment was accepted by the GDOT. He also amended the scope of work to exclude all shoulder and grass work which would be performed inhouse. The lowest bidder, Blount Construction not only would not amend the bid price but increased the cost by \$59,871.

Mr. Hedges continued, our recommendation is to reject all 2022 LMIG bids and utilize the 2022 LMIG grant and match on a new project, specifically, the replacement of the bridge at Old Brent Road. Bridge repair or replacement is a recognized project under the LMIG guidelines and rules.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to approve to reject all bids.

Commissioner Emami seconded for discussion.

Commissioner Ambrose stated he thinks we need to cancel the bids, but the money needs to be used or we lose it. Commissioner Ambrose stated he did not think Old Brent Road was the right choice.

Commissioner Ambrose asked Kim Stokes if he thought the pricing would be coming down on road construction materials.

Kim Stokes replied that is a hard question to answer.

Commissioner Emami stated he is developing a road right now and he has a price for about a half mile of paving that it is going to be somewhere around \$664,000. We had six bids for the project and the first bid almost made us stop the whole project, but the last estimate was half of what the first one was. He asked how is it that someone can have bids twice what a competitor is. He stated he doesn't want Monroe County paying twice the amount.

Following a Board discussion, the motion to reject the bids carried 4-0.

Old Brent Road

County Manager Jim Hedges stated the massive rain falls in April 2022, caused significant damage to the bridge on Old Brent Road resulting in the temporary closure of the road to all traffic. Carter Engineering, Kim Stokes, and Chris Walker have looked at the options for reopening Old Brent Road which includes the installation of metal or concrete pipes with headwalls, or the installation of a prefabricated bridge. The latter being the most expensive; however, a prefabricated bridge provides a significant increase in the in-take area, fewer inspections, less maintenance and less restrictions and a longer life expectancy.

- Install double 114” metal pipe, headwalls, engineering, and contingency-\$984,000
 - Pros-Less expensive, use of LMIG grant allowed, can be installed with county forces.
 - Cons-less volume of water, frequent inspections, increased maintenance, corrosion and abrasion, flow restriction upstream, limited life expectancy.
- Install triple 96” concrete pipe, headwalls, engineering, and contingency-\$1,490,000
 - Pros-Less expensive, use of LMIG grant allowed, can be installed with county forces.
 - Cons-less volume of water, frequent inspections, increased maintenance, corrosion and abrasion, flow restriction upstream, limited life expectancy.
- Install prefabricated bridge, engineering, and contingency-\$1,590,000
 - Pros- provides a significant increase in the in-take area, fewer inspections, less maintenance and less restrictions and a longer life expectancy.
 - Cons-more expensive

The Old Brent Road bridge is necessary due to the runoff collected by Todd Creek which starts north of the training center and has several smaller creeks feeding into Todd Creek before the water reaches Old Brent Road.

The recommendation from Carter Engineering, Kim Stokes, and Chris Walker is to replace the existing bridge with a prefabricated bridge utilizing funding from the 2022 LMIG grant, and match coupled with SPLOST funds.

Following an extensive Board discussion with Kim Stokes regarding the options for Old Brent Road bridge, Commissioner Ambrose motioned to not rebuild the bridge at this time.

Commissioner Emami seconded the motion

Motion carried 3-1 with Commissioner Davis opposed.

Central Georgia Joint Development Authority Appointments

Laura Mathis, Executive Director of the Middle Georgia Regional Commissioner has pointed out that James Vaughn and Benson Ham’s appointment to the Central Georgia Joint Development Authority will expire on December 16, 2022. Both are eligible for re-appointment for a four-year term for the period December 16, 2022, through December 15, 2026. Mr. Vaughn is the current Chairman of the Development Authority.

Kerri Swearingen stated Mr. Vaughn does a great job and would like to be reappointed, but she isn’t sure about whether Mr. Ham would like to be reappointed.

Commissioner Emami motioned to reappoint Mr. Vaughn and table the appointment for Mr. Ham.

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

Conference Center/Legion Hall Fees

Since joining Monroe County, Candice Baswell as the Conference Center Director, along with Lorri Robinson have been evaluating our rental rates at the Conference Center and the High Falls Legion Hall. Their comparison has taken into consideration rates of similar venues in central Georgia and recommend increasing rates in some instances, and lower rates in others.

Monroe County Conference Center	Current	Current	Recom	Recom
	Rental Fee	Deposit	Rental Fee	Deposit
EL. Ballroom	\$1,800.00	\$900.00	\$2,000.00	\$1,000.00
Ballroom for Wedding, Bridal Suite, and Reception	\$2,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$2,200.00	\$1,100.00
Monet	\$900.00	\$450.00	\$1000.00	\$500.00
Renoir/Degas Combo	\$900.00	\$450.00	\$700.00	\$350.00
Separated (60 people each)	\$450	\$200.00	\$350.00	\$175.00
Peach	\$550.00	\$200.00	\$550.00	\$200.00
Davinci Board Room	\$175.00		\$175.00	
Tablecloths	\$2.00		\$5.00	
Skirting	\$3.00		\$8.00	
Dance Floor	\$250.00		\$250.00	
Stage	\$250.00		\$250.00	
LCD Projector	\$75.00		\$75.00	
Podium	\$25.00		\$25.00	
Microphone	\$25.00		\$25.00	
Easel	\$5.00		\$5.00	
Conference Center-Employee Discount/once per year			35%	35%
High Falls Legion Hall	\$200.00	\$50.00	\$250.00	\$50.00
Employee Price	\$125.00	\$20.00	\$145.00	\$50.00

Commissioner Rowland motioned to approve the new recommended rates with the addition of a \$2.00 table set up fee.

Commissioner Ambrose seconded the motion and the motion carried 3-0 with Commissioner Emami out of the room.

Comprehensive Plan Resolution

The 2022-2042 Comprehensive Plan has been approved by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. The last step in this process is for the Monroe County Board of Commissioners to adopt via Resolution the 2022-2024 Comprehensive Plan Update for Monroe County Georgia and the Cities of Culloden and Forsyth. Commissioner Ambrose motioned to approve with Commissioner Davis signing in the absence of Chairman Tapley.

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

Recertification Classes-Conference Center

Community Development Manager Kelsey Fortner is requesting to host recertification classes for Level 1A, Level 1B, and Level II at the Monroe County Conference Center on October 6, 2022. Ms. Fortner is requesting that the county pay the upfront cost and the attendees, minus employees, would pay the county for the class. The total cost for the class is \$1,875.00 and the attendee cost would be \$125.00 each.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to approve as well as all future dates without coming back before the board. Commissioner Emami seconded the motion and the motion carried 4-0.

Recreation Scoreboards Purchase

County Manager Jim Hedges stated back in March 2021, the Recreation Department approached the Board of Commissioners regarding improvements at the Recreation Department, specifically for new scoreboards at a cost of \$80,000, which did not include installation, with funding from the 2020 SPLOST. Mr. Hedges stated new quotes have now been received and approval of the new scoreboards is being requested.

The following two bids were received:

- NEVCO \$129,616.75 w/wireless
- Electro-Mech \$137,196.00 w/o wireless
 \$143,001.00 w/ wireless
- Price includes installation to GA specifications along with new hardware.

Recreation Director, Landon Sparks is requesting Board of Commissioners approval to purchase 8 baseball/softball scoreboards and 1 football scoreboard at the cost of \$129,616.75 from NEVCO.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to approve the purchase as recommended by the Recreation Director.

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

Grant Applications

County Manager Jim Hedges stated after only six weeks on the job as our Grant Writer, Tammy Selman is coming forward with several potential grant opportunities. Some had no match which do not require Board approval, and others do have a match, which will require Board approval to submit the grant application.

Ms. Selman presented the following grants for approval:

- Live Stream Camera Grant for Animal Welfare
 - The grant is for a security camera livestream grant to include one outdoor 4K dome security camera with built-in microphone, one PoE injector, one 100 ft CAT5e Cable, and one 6 ft CAT5e Cable. The grant deadline is September 30, 2022. All equipment is funded 100%. There are no licensing costs for the camera or subscription fees. Technical advice is included. Installation would need to be provided.
- Heroe's Comfort
 - This grant assists first responders, nurses, emergency dispatchers, corrections officers, and military veterans through the assistance of well bred and professionally trained service dogs. The grant deadline is September 23, 2022. Heroe's Comfort will assume any adoption fees for the support animal, as well as obedience training for the support animal at the local level. The support animal will be awarded from Lacona, Iowa and all travel expenses for pick up will be provided through Heroe's Comfort. Other expenses to consider will be daily expenses for the care of the animal such as food, vaccination fees, etc.
- Rachel Ray Save Them All Grant
 - Organizations may apply for a grant amount not to exceed 10% of the operating budget. In this case, the Animal Shelter will be asking for \$15,000.00. The grant funds must be spent within one year. The grant deadline is September 30, 2022. The purpose of the grant is the funds will be used to purchase supplies and materials to dedicate a small room where animals will be showcased over a live 'puppy cam' to aid in adoption. Other grant funds would be used to assist with spay and neutering of pets, as well as day-to-day operations. The project will be 100% funded. The Animal Shelter would be responsible for having an account with YouTube or another Live Stream Host. The animal shelter currently uses FACEBOOK at no cost.
- Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program
 - The grant is used to provide stewardship, conservation and protection to state parks, state lands, local parks, trails, etc. Projects should be completed within tow years. Minimum award of \$500,000 and \$3,000,000 maximum award. Matching funds of 25% is required. The grant deadline is October 14, 2022. Successful pre-applications will be notified Spring of 2023 to continue the application. Grant awarded by June 2023. Project competition within two years of award. The Recreation Department will be asking for \$3,000,000. The county will need to provide a match of 25%. Grant \$2,250,000; County match \$750,000.00; Total project

\$3,000,000. Other costs to consider would be maintenance of areas and increase in utilities after implementation of grant.

- Recycling, Waste Reduction, and Diversion Grant
 - Award amounts vary. Funding up to 100% of grant. Grants awarded between December-January of 2023. Project must be completed within two years of award. The grant deadline is September 30, 2022. Project focus will be to support recycling and waste diversion infrastructure and assist with waste reduction. The recycling/solid waste department will be asking for \$750,000.00. Matching funds are not required; however, this is a category withing the scoring rubric. Therefore, the county will be asking for \$750,000.00 with a 10% match. Grant \$675,000.00 Match \$75,000.00 Total Project \$750,000.00. Other costs to consider would be maintenance of any additional equipment after implementation of grant.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to approve to apply for the grants and up to 25% county match on the recreation and recycling grants.

Commissioner Emami seconded for discussion, asking the County Manager if he approved.

Mr. Hedges stated he did approve.

Motion carried 4-0.

Scarecrow Contest-Courthouse Square

Rebecca Headley with Forsyth Main Street stated they will be hosting the 1st Annual Scarecrow Contest and they are asking permission for the Scarecrows to be placed on the Courthouse square. The scarecrows will begin being placed on September 30th and must be taken down before November 4th. Contest runs between October 1st until October 31st.

Kerri Swearingen stated other communities locally do the same thing. She stated it's a way to beautify the downtown area for fall as well to bring the community together. She stated she had spoken with Superior Court Clerk Lindsey Taylor about this.

Commissioner Rowland stated he wants the Veterans Memorial area to be avoided as well as the sidewalks.

Commissioner Ambrose stated Judge Robins had some reservations and asked had this been worked out.

County Manager Jim Hedges stated Judge Robins had stated she is opposed to this due to the number of court cases that are being held in the month of October.

Commissioner Rowland motioned to approve with the consideration of working with Judge Donna Robins.

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

LOST Discussion

County Manager Jim Hedges stated the city is proposing another LOST negotiating meeting on Monday, September 26th at 9:00 a.m. in our chamber to be facilitated by Laura Mathis. Again, the city wants to leverage an outcome on Service Delivery Strategy relating to our water rights to the north for the H & H property. In discussions with John since our last meeting, he put forward the following:

- Distribution-78% County, and 22% for the municipalities; however, they want to split it. This split will benefit the county by \$1.5 million, or more, over the next 10 years.
- Appointments to the Hospital and Development Authorities as previously discussed.
- Sale of water to the county at \$3/1,000 gallons connecting the north customers to the Forsyth water connection.
- County releases their water rights to Forsyth exclusively for the H & H properties.

Mr. Hedges stated his opinion of a facilitator would be that it is not anyone from the Regional Commission, should a facilitator be needed, we should bring in a mediator.

Mr. Hedges stated he thinks the way forward would be for him and the City Manager to get together and work on a solution.

Commissioner Emami stated he thinks that's a great idea. He stated he feels confident that the County Manager knows where each commissioner stands.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to allow the County Manager to work with the City Manager on LOST negotiations and bring back the decision before the Board.

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

Freeman Ave./Clayton English Drive

Commissioner Davis stated Freeman Ave and Clayton English Drive is currently a two way stop and needs to be a four-way.

Commissioner Emami motioned to start the process of installing a four-way stop at Freeman Ave and Clayton English Drive.

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

Yatesville Fire Department

This item was removed from the agenda.

Computer Hardware

County Manager Jim Hedges stated the current budget does not include any funding for the purchase of computer hardware. Working with Boyd Elrod, we have determined that several desktop computers, monitors, printers, and computer cameras are required. Specifically, personnel computers are needed in the Sheriff's

office, Monroe County Emergency Services, the Water Department, Grant Writer, Probate Court office, and Public Works. Mr. Hedges stated currently we still have over \$600,000 in the contingency budget. Boyd Elrod has stated we would need about \$38,000 to cover the cost. Mr. Hedges stated he was asking approval to move forward with the purchase with funds to come from contingency.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to approve.

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

Old Business

There was no old business discussed.

Commissioners' Comments

Commissioner Emami stated he would like to thank Chief Jackson along with the County Manager for their work on the Mutual Aid Agreement with Butts County for fire services in the Brushy Creek and Harbour Shores area.

Commissioner Rowland welcomed the new Public Works Director, Chris Walker. Commissioner Rowland stated Road Superintendent Jr. Watts will be retiring on October 17, 2022, and he would like to thank him for his service to Monroe County and a job well done.

Commissioner Ambrose stated we eliminated a job in maintenance and combined that position with the Road Department. Commissioner Ambrose thinks this new position should be bumped up a couple dollars an hour. County Manager Jim Hedges asked that he be allowed to look into it, and he would bring it back to the board. Commissioner Davis stated he would like to let everyone know the next townhall meeting with himself and Councilman Julius Stroud would be held on October 8, 2022, in Culloden.

Public Comments

Bar None Road resident Allen Evans stated Bar None Road is a county road and needs to be brought up to county standards. Mr. Evans stated the school buses refuse to come down it. The Board asked Mr. Evans to allow them to look at the road.

John Ricketson, 128 Carriage Drive resident stated when he first moved to Monroe County, at the corner of Pate Road and New Forsyth Road dumpsters and roll offs were sitting there. After the convenience centers were put in it stopped a lot of the illegal trash dumping, so he thinks the grants for the convenience centers are a great idea and asked why cardboard recycling couldn't be mandatory.

Jenkins Road resident, Laura Dewitt, addressed the Board asking about the old firetrucks being sold and asking how many new firetrucks have been received.

Executive Session

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to enter executive session for personnel at 11:42 a.m.

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

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to come out of executive session at 12:11 p.m.

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

Action from Executive Session

County Attorney Ben Vaughn stated a personnel item was discussed but no action was taken.

Adjourn

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to adjourn at 12:13 p.m.

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

Respectively Submitted by:

Janet Abbott, County Clerk