

Monroe County Board of Commissioners

Minutes of the October 03, 2023

Regular Commissioners Meeting

6:00 P.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-Not Present/Present on-line

Richard Dumas, Public Information Officer

Kelsey Fortner, Community Development Manager

Welcome

Chairman Tapley welcomed everyone in attendance.

Prayer

Reverend David Blalock of Mount Pleasant Baptist Church gave the invocation.

Pledge

Chairman Tapley led the Pledge.

Roll Call

Community Development Manager Kelsey Fortner called roll.

Call to Order

Chairman Tapley called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Proclamation-Williams Chapel AME Church

Chairman Tapley read a proclamation commemorating October 15, 2023, as the 150th anniversary of Williams Chapel AME Church.

New Business

Approve Agenda

Chairman Tapley presented the agenda for approval with the addition of clarification of private roads in the UDO as item M, the purchase of a front-end loader as item N and executive session for legal.

Commissioner Emami motioned to approve the agenda with said changes.

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

Approve Minutes-BOC Meeting-September 19, 2023, Regular Meeting

Commissioner Emami motioned to approve the minutes of the September 19, 2023, Regular meeting with the normal 30 days for changes.

Chairman Tapley seconded the motion, and the motion was carried 5-0.

Mental Health Services Support Resolution

Counties are the closest constitutional form of government to their constituents and are often on the frontline of addressing pressing community issues such as mental health. Within recent years, Georgia has made significant strides regarding mental health reform, and ACCG and Georgia's counties have played a critical role in spearheading those efforts. As the mental health crisis persists, it is incumbent upon Georgia's county officials to continue to help lead efforts with state officials to devise solutions for all who call the Peach State home.

There is strength in the collective and unified voice of Georgia's 159 counties. That said, ACCG is strongly encouraging every county in the state to adopt a resolution urging the Governor and General Assembly to continue efforts to reform and improve mental health services for the citizens of Georgia.

Chairman Tapley read the Mental Health Resolution into the minutes.

Commissioner Davis motioned to approve the Resolution.

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

Georgia State Patrol Request

Sergeant Raul Mejia, Troop D, Post 44, the interim commanding officer has requested assistance from the Monroe County Board of Commissioners. Specifically, the annual budget for Post 44 includes funding for cleaning supplies, but not labor. The Post is expected to use inmate labor; however, that requires taking a trooper off the road to escort and supervise the inmate while cleaning the post facility. Sgt. Mejia is going to request county assistance in providing a housekeeper to provide this service. Additionally, he will probably ask

for assistance in maintaining the grounds as this work is currently being handled by Troopers assigned to Post 44, again, taking them off the road.

GSP Sgt. Asher Grey and GSP Sgt. Raul Mejia, Interim Commanding Officer of Post 44 in Forsyth addressed the Board for the request.

Chairman Tapley stated he would like to ask Lamar County, Macon-Bibb, and the City of Forsyth to contribute to the cost.

Following a Board discussion Commissioner Ambrose stated he would be willing to fund the cleaning and lawn maintenance for six months until GSP has time to request funding from Lamar and Macon-Bibb.

Commissioner Emami motioned to allocate \$10,000 for Post 44 housekeeping and lawn maintenance.

Commissioner Davis seconded the motion, and the motion was carried 4-1 with Commissioner Rowland opposed.

Commissioner Rowland stated he appreciates the hard work and efforts of their jobs, but he was opposed to spending county money on Post 44 because it's another state mandate being passed down to local governments.

Commissioner Rowland stated he feels it sets a precedent for other state offices to request funding from Monroe County.

GDOT Agreement Proposal

The Georgia Department of Transportation is moving forward with the creation of a round-about at the intersection of SR 74 and SR 42. Accordingly, the GDOT wants to install lighting around the round-about and are willing to pay for the lighting to be installed; however, their agreement would result in Monroe County being responsible for providing energy, and the operation and maintenance of the lighting system for 50 years. Commissioner Ambrose motioned to deny.

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

TSPLOST Update

County Manager Jim Hedges stated the TSPLOST referendum held in November 2021, provided for the maximum tax to be collected was \$17,000,000. Collections are forecast to be reached in Sept/Oct 2024, after which, TSPLOST will cease. In order to continue collecting TSPLOST, a renewal referendum will need to be held.

Referendum Terms:

- The TSPLOST referendum approved in November 2021 provided for the raising of an estimated amount of \$17,000,000 (gross) for transportation purposes for a period of 20 consecutive calendar quarters (60 months) commencing on April 1, 2022.

TSPLOST Ends

- The tax ceases to be imposed on the earliest of the following dates:
 - (1) on the final day of the maximum period-of-time (5 years) or,
 - (2) at the end of the calendar quarter that the State Revenue Commissioner determines that the tax will have raised revenues sufficient to provide funds specified as the maximum amount of funds to be raised by the tax.

TSPLOST Background Work

- After the referendum approval, County engaged the services of Neel-Schaffer Engineering.
 - Evaluated, mapped, took photos, and scored to GDOT standards all roads in Monroe County.
 - Engaged the services of Kimbel Stokes

TSPLOST Program

- The current TSPLOST program is one of the most advanced, cost effective, and long-term programs in the State of Georgia.
- Internally, roads were identified as “arterial” or “collector”.
 - Identified 50 miles of Arterial roads.
 - Identified 59 miles of Collector roads.
- For a project to be let to contract, the following procedures must be followed:
 - Funding must be available.
 - Engineering work must be performed.
 - Bid packages assembled.
 - Advertisements for bids.
 - Contracts awarded and approved.
 - Projects must fit into the selected Contractors’ schedule.

TSPLOST Collections

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|------------|
| ➤ Maximum Collection-Gross | \$17,000,000 | |
| ➤ Maximum Collection-Net Monroe | \$14,143,558 | Average |
| ➤ TSPLOST Collections (July 2023) | \$7,206,650 | 450,415.63 |
| ➤ Remaining to be Collected | \$6,936,908 | |

TSPLOST Expenditures

➤ TSPLOST Collections (July 2023)	\$7,206,650
○ 2022/2023 LMIG Net	(\$3,411,856)
○ Reedy Creek Bridge	(\$162,900)
○ Paver/Roller	(\$400,000)
○ Small Projects	(\$600,000)
○ Old Brent Road Bridge-Estimate	(\$750,000)
○ Recreation Road-Estimate	(\$600,000)
	(\$5,924,756)

Montpelier Station
Jenkins Road
Parks Road
Josey Road
Rumble Road
Stokes Store Road

TSPLOST Status

➤ Current Funds On-hand	\$1,281,894
➤ To be collected	\$6,936,908
	\$8,218,802
➤ Monthly Average	\$450,416
➤ Remaining Months for Collection	15
➤ TSPLOST Maximum Collection	Oct-24
➤ Maximum Collections will be achieved in 31 months instead of 60 months.	

ACCG Guide

- Can a single county TSPLOST be renewed prior to the end of the period of time for which it was imposed?
- Yes, the tax can be renewed following the same process. This process can occur while the current tax is still being collected.

Referendum Options

- March 12, 2024-Presidential Preference Primary (July 1, 2024)
- May 21, 2024-Georgia General Primary (October 1, 2024)
- November 5, 2024-General Elections (April 1, 2025)

Action Needed:

- TSPLOST needs to be renewed by the voters. This is not a “new” tax, but a renewal of the existing TSPLOST.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to instruct the County Manager to begin the renewal process for a March 12, 2024, referendum.

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

Monroe County Hospital Authority Appointment

The reappointment or replacement of Larry D. Burney on the Monroe Hospital Authority at the January 3, 2023, organizational meeting was overlooked. Mr. Burney's term expired on January 16, 2023. Mr. Burney, or a replacement, needs to be appointed to the Monroe Hospital Authority for a five-year term.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to reappoint Larry Burney to the Hospital Authority for a five-year term.

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

Culloden Clubhouse Donation

Commissioner Eddie Rowland has requested the building owned by Monroe County located on Thomaston Road, Parcel 007B 053, in Culloden be declared as surplus to the county and donated to the City of Culloden.

As background, this building was originally owned by the City of Culloden and at some time, donated to Monroe County for use as a designated polling place and is no longer designated as such. The building is currently being used by the City of Culloden for local events and meetings.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to declare the Culloden Clubhouse surplus and to donate to the City of Culloden.

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

Personal Transportation Vehicle Discussion

Commissioner Emami, at the request of the River Forest Board, has requested the development of PTV Ordinance. The action item is to instruct Attorney Ben Vaughn to create a draft ordinance which will then come before the Commissioners for approval, and the designation of routes.

County Attorney Ben Vaughn stated the River Forest Homeowners' Association has requested that PTV's be allowed in the River Forest subdivision and has also requested for Monroe County Sheriff Brad Freeman to allow deputies to make traffic stops on private roads in River Forest.

Mr. Vaughn stated that state code allows local governments to designate certain public streets or portions of streets for PTV's to use as paths, but operating standards must be met, signage must be erected and the maximum speed limit for PTV's cannot exceed 25 mph.

River Forest HOA member Randall Hammock stated River Forest residents have always used golf carts, but the purpose of the request is to allow the Sheriff's Office to enforce traffic laws within the subdivision.

Following a Board discussion, Commissioner Emami motioned to instruct County Attorney Ben Vaughn and County Manager Jim Hedges to create a draft ordinance including the designation of routes where PTVs are allowed in Monroe County.

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

FIT Property-Conditional Use/Variance (Billboard)

Applicant Charles Gardener is requesting to place a fifth outdoor advertising sign on I-75 quadrant between Exit 185 and Exit 186. The existing four signs are on our city property, and this is being requested on county land. Years ago, a billboard was present but was removed when the business went bankrupt. Mrs. Fortner stated the Planning and Zoning Board recommended approval.

Commissioner Davis motioned to approve.

Commissioner Rowland seconded the motion, and the motion was carried 4-1 with Commissioner Ambrose opposed.

Commissioner Ambrose stated he is opposed to billboards in general due to the distraction to drivers.

P&Z Hearing-Hill-Variance

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to move into a public hearing at 7:21 p.m. for a variance application located at 036 015C, Brownlee Road.

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

Community Development Manager Kelsey Fortner presented a variance application located at 036 015C, Brownlee Road. Ms. Fortner stated the current zoning is Agricultural. Ms. Fortner stated this is a parcel that consists of a total of 35.82-acres along Brownlee Road has a division of property on Brownlee Road with approximately 5.4-acres on one side of the road leaving it separate. The applicant is requesting to parcel 3-acres off the 5.4-acre lot to build a home. In this case it will leave 2.4-acres, non-compliant per the county ordinance. The property owner is Charles T. Strickland, and the applicant is Kaleb Hill.

No one was present in opposition.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to move out of the public hearing at 7:24 p.m.

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

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to approve.

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

Subdivision Plat Approval

Community Development Manager Kelsey Fortner stated Steve Coleman has a plat drawn for part of map 062-parcel 032, off Giles Road. The proposed plat is for 17 parcels totaling 85.82-acres. The creation of a private road, Pine Meadow Trail. The property owners are Acquire Timber II, LLC. Mrs. Fortner stated the total acreage is 85.82 and the number of lots proposed is 17. Mrs. Fortner stated the intent of the land division is to sell individual residential lots and the roads will be private.

Following a Board discussion, Commissioner Emami stated because this is the first subdivision applied for under the County's new UDO, he wants to ensure that it complies with the new regulations regarding private roads, curb cuts, and road frontage.

The Board agreed by general consensus to table the discussion until the October 17, 2023, meeting.

Private Road

Commissioner Emami stated he thinks there is some confusion as to what is required from a private road in the new UDO. He stated it currently reads that a private road would have to be built in accordance with county standards which could be extremely prohibitive, and he doesn't think that was the spirit of what any of the Board members were trying to do.

County Attorney Ben Vaughn stated he thinks the confusion is people are asking if it must be paved to Kim Stokes paving specifications or paved at all and he doesn't think that was the intent of the ordinance. He stated he would be happy to clarify that.

Commissioner Ambrose asked if there were specifications for gravel road.

Mr. Vaughn replied that the only one he is aware of is 60 ft width.

Commissioner Emami stated we also need to make sure there is not a minimum road frontage requirement. He stated the maintenance and what's happening on a private road is up to the homeowners and if there are more than three lots it must come to the Board for approval and at that point if the Board wanted to do something more they could.

County Attorney Ben Vaughn stated during the research of private roads, the definition of minor subdivisions was run across and needed clarification. Mr. Vaughn stated in the old ordinance it was a 10-acre requirement and in the new ordinance there is not a minimum acreage and that is what he needs clarification on.

Following a Board discussion, it was agreed for Mr. Vaughn to amend the UDO to 5-acres on a private road for a minor subdivision and if all other requirements are met it can be administratively approved.

County Attorney Ben Vaughn stated he would get the UDO revised and bring it back to the board for approval.

Public Works Front End Loader

County Manager Jim Hedges stated the CAT Front-end loader used at the Public Works yard has a complete hydraulic pump failure and the cost to repair is \$31,607. This piece of equipment is a 2003 with 10,431 hours. Similar front-end loaders this old in running condition are for sale at around \$50,000/ Newer models with low hours of operation are priced between \$125,000 to \$200,000.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to approve the front-end loader repair in the amount of \$31,607.

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

Commissioner Comments

District 1-Lamarcus Davis

Commissioner Davis thanked Kelsey Fortner for sitting in for the clerk. Commissioner Davis stated he thinks the county is starting to reap the rewards from the T-SPLOST, he encouraged support for the T-SPLOST so the county could continue to improve the roads.

District 2-Eddie Rowland

Commissioner Rowland wanted to commend Kelsey Fortner and Jeff Wilson, he stated it's a difficult job to tell people what they don't want to hear, and he appreciates the extra effort they put into explaining why decisions are made.

District 3-John Ambrose

Commissioner Ambrose stated he was glad everyone was working towards the betterment of Monroe County.

District 4-George Emami

Commissioner Emami had no comments.

Chairman Greg Tapley

Chairman Tapley stated Leadership Monroe would be at the county building on Thursday.

Public Comments

No public comments.

Executive Session-Legal

Commissioner Davis motioned to move into executive session at 7:47 p.m. for litigation.

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

The Board reconvened from executive session at 7:53 p.m.

Action from Executive Session

County Attorney Ben Vaughn stated a pending litigation matter was discussed but no action was taken.

Adjourn

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to adjourn at 7:54 p.m.

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

Respectively Submitted by:

Janet Abbott, County Clerk