

Monroe County Board of Commissioners

Minutes of the November 16, 2023

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 Rowland gave 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 8:00 A.M.

New Business

Approve Agenda

Chairman Tapley presented the agenda for approval.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to approve the agenda.

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

Approve Minutes-BOC Meeting-October 17, 2023, Regular Meeting and the November 3, 2023, Called Meeting

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to approve the minutes of the October 17, 2023, Regular meeting, and the November 3, 2023, Called meeting with the normal 30 days for changes.

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

Property Tax Penalty Refund Request

Ms. Lynette Mazyck is appealing property tax penalty & interest on a parcel of land at 6388 GA 42S. The property is listed under the name of Anthony Velasquez at 6388 GA 42S, Montezuma, GA 31063. Ms. Mazyck's association with this property is unknown. Tax Commissioner Lori Andrews acknowledges that her office has sent two address change requests to the Tax Assessor's office and the change has not been entered into the system.

Ms. Mazyck claims that given that the Property Tax Statement was sent to the wrong address, she should not be charged a penalty & interest that totals \$95.34.

Ms. Mazyck was not present.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to deny.

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

2022 Audit Report

Justin Elliot, Auditor with Mauldin and Jenkins, presented the 2022 Independent Audit report. Mr. Elliot stated it was a clean audit with the highest level of assurance and the county was in great financial condition.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to accept the 2022 Audit report.

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

Independent Audit report clean opinion highest level of assurance. Great financial condition

Subdivision Approval-Pine Meadows

Community Development Manager Kelsey Fortner presented a subdivision plat for a proposed subdivision/Pine Meadows.

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.

Ms. Fortner presented the following review and revisions to be made to Pine Meadows Preliminary Plat:

- A certificate from the Monroe County Health Department approving the proposed water supply and septic system if public water is not available here. Section 10.02.07 A.1. C.
- The plat needs to reflect the total area of the proposed subdivision. Section 10.02.07 B.1.b
- A description of the proposed sewage disposal system. Section 10.02.07 B.1.3.c
- The curb cuts or access points need to be approved prior to or simultaneously with the preliminary plat. Section 6.01.05 G
- Building setback lines. Section 10.02.07 B.3.b and 2.J
- Monroe County reserves the right to supplement additional revisions as they are located.

No action taken.

Subdivision Approval-Rocky Branch

Community Development Manager Kelsey Fortner presented a subdivision plat adjustment (land swap) Pate Road.

Ms. Fortner stated this is between two property owners. *Rocky Branch Subdivision* Map 112 Parcel 008A (2181). Map 112 Parcel 008B (2175). 2181 property owners would like to move the lot line to create a larger buffer between the two property owners. 2175 property owners will purchase the piece. The lot line will move approximately 200' northwest, nothing will be left non-compliant.

Ms. Fortner stated this requires board approval because the original plat was Board approved, therefore any changes to the plat must come back before the board.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to approve.

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

Road Name Correction

A lengthy email was sent to Commissioner Emami from Suzy McCowen McCullough outlining the history behind the name of "McCowen" in Monroe County and pointing out that the road in District 2 has been misspelled for a number of years. Ms. McCullough requests the name be corrected from McCowan to McCowen.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to approve the road name correction.

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

Monroe Development Authority Appointment

The appointment term for Jim Cole to the Development Authority of Monroe County expired on February 16, 2023. This is a four-year term.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to appoint Jim Cole to the Development Authority for a four-year term.

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

Highway 74/42 Roundabout Lighting

County Manager Jim Hedges stated following the vote by the Monroe County Board of Commissioners to not fund the electricity and maintenance of the new round-about at SR 42 & SR 74, the Georgia Department of Transportation Regional Engineer, Tyler Peek, requested a meeting with the Chairman and myself. At that meeting, Mr. Peek stated the construction of the new round-about was a high priority for Georgia State Representative Robert Dickey, and failure by the Monroe BOC to agree to the lighting contract would, in all possibility, result in significant delays in moving this project forward.

According to Ray White, and John Fortner, the operating cost with LED lights, for the roundabout at SR 83 and SR 74 is less than \$100 per month and no other operating costs have been incurred. According to Mr. Peek, the LED bulbs being installed by the GDOT have a 10-year warranty. Given the high priority of this project by Representative Dickey, the willingness of the GDOT to remedy this dangerous intersection, and the continued efforts of the Monroe BOC to improve the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of Monroe County, it is my recommendation that the Monroe County BOC authorize the Chairman to sign the 50-year lighting agreement with the GDOT for SR 42 & SR 74.

Commissioner Emami motioned to approve the Highway 74/42 Roundabout Lighting agreement with the GDOT.

Commissioner Rowland seconded the motion for discussion. Commissioner Rowland stated his initial disagreement with the lighting agreement was prompted by the state mandates that go along with these types of agreements but his concern for public safety outweighed his initial disagreement.

The motion was carried 4-1 with Commissioner Ambrose opposed.

2023 Budget Comparison Report

Finance Director Lorri Robinson-Byrd presented the Commissioner with 2023 Budget to Actual report. This is an informational presentation only and no action is required.

General Fund Budgets vs Actual 2023 Budget

General Fund Revenues

- Original budget \$37,077,485

- Amended budget \$38,234,933
- Actual YTD \$17,061,279.50

General Fund Expenditures

- Original Budget \$37,077,485
- Amended Budget \$38,234,993
- Actual YTD \$27,421,620.35

Net Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures -\$10,360,340.85

Local Option Sales Tax Collected through September \$4,390,439.30

Building Permits issued through September 498

E911 Fund

E911 Revenue Totals

- Original Budget \$1,832,147
- Amended Budget \$2,468,770
- YTD Rev \$1,064,431.39

E911 Expenditure Totals

- Original Budget \$1,832,147
- Amended Budget \$2,468,770
- YTD Expenditures \$1,174,520.93

Water Fund

Water Revenue Totals

- Budget \$3,092,525
- Actual \$2,359,465.61

Water Expenditure Totals

- Budget \$3,092,525
- Actual \$1,897,863.65

Solid Waste/Landfill Fund

Solid Waste Revenue Totals

- Original Budget \$1,700,896
- Amended Budget \$1,991,686
- YTD Revenue \$1,607,931.76

Solid Waste Expenditure Totals

- Original Budget \$1,700,896
- Amended Budget \$1,991,686
- YTD Expenditures \$1,576,350.61

Conference Center Fund

Conference Center Revenue Totals

- Original Budget \$234,804
- Actual \$99828.75

Conference Center Expenditure

- Original Budget \$234,804
- Actual \$148,134.92

Capital Projects Fund

Budget

- Transfer In \$1,163,820
- Transfer In-SPLOST \$275,000
- Transfer In-State Seized \$0.00
- Capital Projects Fund Transfer in Total \$1,438,820

YTD Rev/Expd

- Transfer in \$2,696,752.44
- Transfer In-SPLOST \$0
- Transfer In-State seized \$80,274.00
- Capital Projects Transfer in YTD Total \$2,777,026.44

Capital Projects Fund Expenditure Total

- Budget \$1,438,820.00
- YTD Rev/Expd \$2,940,496.63
- Net Revenues/Expd Over/under -\$163,470.19

TSPLOST Fund

- TSPLOST \$3,562,005.73
- Revenue for Culloden \$76,829.64
- Revenue for Forsyth \$642,560.45
- Transfer In \$681,524.34

- TSPLOST Fund Totals \$4,692,920.16
- Intergov't pymt -\$772,387.13
- Deer Creek-Reedy Cr Rd Bridge -\$938,148.86
- Equip-Asphalt Paver & Compactor -\$428,877.00
- 1000 County at Larg -\$1,367,025.86
- TSPLOST Funds Exp Totals -\$2,873,507.17
- Net Revenues Over (Under)Expend \$2,873,507.17

General Fund Cash as of September \$18,490,737.30

TSPLOST update

County Manager Jim Hedges stated the TSPLOST referendum passed on November 2, 2021, and was effective April 1, 2022. The first collection was May 31, 2022.

Collections/Expenditures

- Total Collected: \$7,675,808
- Total Expenditures: \$4,714,753
- Balance on Hand: \$2,961,055

Expenditures

- 2022/2023 LMIG \$3,411,856
- Reedy Creek Bridge \$162,900
- Paver/Roller/Small Projects \$1,000,000
- Sweeper/Trailer \$139,997
- Total \$4,714,753

On the Horizon

- Tharpe Road
- Collier Road
- Rivoli
- Boxankle
- Estes
- Reedy Creek
- Old Macon Road
- Johnstonville (LMIG)
- Pea Ridge (LMIG)

- Shi
- Renouf
- Newton
- High
- Cross Creek Drainage
- Deer Creek Headwall
- McCowan
- Unionville
- Juliette Road (LMIG)

Mr. Hedges stated the measurements, scope of work, and estimates are in progress.

2024 LMIG Recommendation

Kim Stokes presented the proposed 2024 LMIG road improvement list. The overall project covers 15.58 miles or 82, 225 linear feet at an estimated cost of \$4,779,451.

The 2024 LMIG list presented is as follows:

- Johnstonville-Begin SR 42 End I-75-Patch, Widen, SBST, Overlay, 3-way Stop English, 4-Way Stop Boxankle
- Johnstonville-Begin I-75 End Lamar County Line-Patch, Widen, SBST, Overlay
- High Falls Road-Begin Butts County Line End Lamar County Line-Patch, Widen, SBST, Overlay
- Juliette Road-Begin W. Redding End Blue Store Road-Patch, Widen, SBST, Overlay
- Estes Road-Begin SR 41 End Whittle Road-Patch, Widen, SBST, Overlay

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to approve the 2024 LMIG list.

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

Asphalt Distributor Trailer Mounted Tack Tank

Public Works has developed an outstanding team and has quickly become proficient in resurfacing roads in Monroe County. With the purchase of a paver, and roller, Kim Stokes is recommending the addition of a trailer mounted tack tank. Quotes from Reynolds-Warren in Lake City, and Yancey in Forsyth have been obtained. Kim Stokes recommendation is to purchase the Leeboy L600T Trailer Mounted Tack Tank from Reynolds-Warren in the amount of \$34,000 with funding to come from TSPLOST.

Quotes were as follows:

Reynolds-Warren	2023 Leeboy L600T	\$34,000	In Stock
Yancey	Weller Model TT600	\$41,619	60 Day delivery

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to purchase the 2023 LeeBoy from Reynolds-Warren in the amount of \$34,000 with funding to come from TSPLOST.

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

Deer Creek Headwalls Bids

Kim Stokes stated the headwalls at Deer Creek on Jenkins Road need to be replaced as they were washed out during the storms in April 2023. Utilizing the services of Carter Engineering, bid packets were developed and two bids were received. Buxton Construction bid \$648,736.10; Sam Hall & Sons bid \$695,430.00. Both bids were deemed exorbitant, and Kim Stokes' recommendation is to reject all bids and redesign and rebid.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to reject all bids and redesign and rebid the Deer Creek Headwalls.

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

Recycling Centers Overview

County Manager Jim Hedges stated at a recent Board of Commissioners' meeting, an issue arose relating to the operations of the Recycling Centers, specifically relating to C & D materials. Solid Waste Director Dana Renaud prepared a presentation for the board addressing C & D materials as well as other issues at the Recycling Centers.

The Board discussed in depth the rules and regulations for the recycle centers. Following the discussion, it was agreed the Board would consider options to allow the landfill to be more accessible to the citizens and the possibility of installing cameras at the centers.

Land Purchase

County Attorney Ben Vaughn presented a Resolution authorizing the purchase of 0.06 acres for the booster pump station, to be located at the intersection of Blount Road and Garr Road. The land is being purchased from White Horse Partner, LLLP and Loblolly Investments LLLP for the sum of \$3500.00.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to approve the resolution for the purchase of 0.06 acres at the intersection of Blount Road and Garr Road for a booster pump station.

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

2024 Budget Overview-Public Hearing

County Manager Jim Hedges stated the development of the 2024 budget has been a real challenge given the significant decrease in property taxes stemming from Plant Scherer, inflation, salary market adjustments for the Sheriff's Department, MCES, and a 5% salary adjustment for all remaining employees, excluding the County Manager. The proposed budget includes two contingency reserves, the normal contingency of \$500,000, and as agreed, a salary contingency for all approved but open positions of \$1,421,247.

Commissioner Davis motioned to open a public hearing at 9:37 a.m. for the 2024 Budget Overview.

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

The Board discussed in depth the details of the 2024 budget.

No one in the public spoke regarding the 2024 Budget presentation.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to close the public hearing at 10:25 a.m.

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

Public Comments

Archie Brown, resident of 89 Allen Street, spoke stating the county needs more industry so that the youth graduating from Monroe County schools would have a place to work.

Percy Freeman, resident of 47 Hilltop Street, asked the board if the county has a 10- or 20-year plan and if they had ever considered hiring a planner.

Commissioners' Comments

Health Insurance Incentive-Commissioner Eddie Rowland

Commissioner Rowland motioned to increase the amount we pay as an incentive to employees for not having county insurance from \$100 to \$300 per month effective January 1, 2024.

Commissioner Emami seconded the motion and the motion carried 3-0-2 with Commissioner Ambrose and Commissioner Davis abstaining due to the fact they currently receive the incentive.

Commissioner Rowland gave an in-depth reason why the county is remaining with reference-based health insurance rather than going back to the traditional health insurance stating the main reason is due to the cost to either the taxpayers or the county employees. He also stated there would now be an added employee to assist the employees with their insurance.

Commissioner Lamarcus Davis

Commissioner Davis thanked the administration staff for their hard work on the 2024 budget.

Commissioner John Ambrose

Commissioner Ambrose stated the Board must stop letting 10-12 residents stop them from making decisions about industry coming into the county.

Commissioner George Emami

Commissioner Emami stated he had several citizens that had asked about adding pickle ball to the recreation department and would like to possibly leave money in the budget to add this sport.

Commissioner Emami stated he agrees that the county needs growth in industry. Commissioner Emami stated that for every citizen that says we need jobs, growth and industry, there are others that say I don't care if you raise taxes.

Chairman Greg Tapley

Chairman Tapley stated there is a meeting with the Development Authority and the Board of Education after the Commission meeting to develop a vision for Monroe County.

Executive Session

There was no executive session.

Action from Executive Session-Real Estate

There was no executive session therefore no action was needed.

Adjourn

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to adjourn at 10:50 a.m.

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

Respectively Submitted by:

Janet Abbott, County Clerk