

Monroe County Board of Commissioners

Minutes of the February 7, 2023

Regular Commissioners Meeting

6:00 P.M. Meeting

Present:

Greg Tapley, Chairman

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

Richard Dumas, Public Information Officer

Kelsey Fortner, Community Development Director-Not Present

Welcome

Chairman Tapley welcomed everyone in attendance.

Prayer

Retired Army Chaplain Rod Callahan with the Monroe County Ministerial Association 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 6:00 P.M.

New Business

Approve Agenda

Chairman Tapley presented the agenda for approval adding surplus vehicles.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to approve the agenda with said changes.

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

Approve Minutes-BOC Meeting-January 17, 2023, Regular Meeting

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to approve the minutes of the January 17, 2023, Regular meeting with the usual 30 days for changes.

Commissioner Rowland seconded the motion.

The motion carried 5-0.

Support-Coalition Against Bigger Trucks

County Manager Jim Hedges stated Monroe County has been contacted by Joshua M. Collins, Assistant Vice-President of the Coalition Against Bigger Trucks, seeking the county's support in contacting our representatives in the Georgia General Assembly opposing legislation allowing significantly heavier trucks on roads throughout Georgia.

Federal law controls maximum gross vehicle weights and axle loads on the Interstate System. Federal limits are 80,000 pounds gross vehicle weight, 20,000 pounds on single axle, and 34,000 pounds on a tandem axle group. This year, legislation may be introduced to allow trucks to operate at weights as high as 90,000 pounds. Worse, because these trucks are not permitted to operate on interstates, residents across Monroe County will be forced to share state and local roads with these much heavier configurations.

Mr. Hedges stated the action item is to authorize the chairman to sign letter to be sent to state senator John Kennedy and state representatives Robert Dickey, David Knight, and Dale Washburn urging them to oppose the proposed legislation that would allow the heavier trucks on state and county roads.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to approve a letter of opposition be sent to representatives and senators.

Commissioner Emami seconded for discussion.

Chairman Tapley opened the discussion for citizens in attendance.

Nipper Bunn resident of 274 Frank Bunn Drive spoke stating he has been in the logging business for 43 years. He stated he thinks the legislation is only adding a tolerance of 12.5%, allowing for trucks up to 90,000 pounds. He stated this would be some assistance to loggers to help with inflation and to be more profitable. He stated hopes the Board will keep the loggers in Monroe County in mind when making their decision.

James Beavers, resident of 2757 Boxankle Road, stated he supports Nipper Bunn's statement.

Preston Lancaster, resident of 1716 Juliette Road, stated he is in support of the legislation. He stated he works for the forestry many of the surrounding states already allow 90,000-pound trucks and to be competitive the weight limit needs to be increased.

Kim Stokes spoke on the difference in the weight limits and how they affect Monroe County roads. His opinion is the weight is not as detrimental as the number of loads that will be traveling on the roads.

Commissioner Emami withdrew his second.

Motion dies for lack of a second. Chairman Tapley stated this just means Monroe County remains neutral.

Lakeshore Drive Contract Award

During the spring floods, the culvert under Lakeshore Drive had significant damage that requires an outside contractor to repair this section of road. Compounding the scope-of-work is the adjacent and upslope pond and residential homes below the road. Carter Engineering prepared the engineering specifications and the following bids have been received:

- Buxton Construction \$206,829.77
- Complete Site \$458,500.00
- John R. Walker \$577,155.00
- McLeRoy \$347,422.00
- Sam Hall and Sons \$392,862.00
- Southeastern Site Development \$321,837.66

Kim Stokes presented the bids and the specs for the project.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to award the bid to Buxton Construction in the amount of \$206,829.77.

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

Commissioner Emami asked do we feel confident that the bids are apples to apples with the range of bid prices.

Mr. Stokes replied he did, and the work will be inspected.

Motion carried 5-0.

United Grading Change Order-Boxankle Road

The Board of Commissioners will need to approve the Change Order with United Grading for the installation of a 12" water main on Boxankle Road from the existing master meter at the intersection of Johnstonville Road to the existing water main at Mayfield Road at a cost of \$1,962,252.00.

Commissioner Emami motioned to approve the change order.

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

Recreation Department Security

County Manager Jim Hedges stated over the past several weeks, the Recreation Department and the Sheriff's Department have engaged in discussions relating to the provision of security at the Recreation Department during approved sporting events. The primary issue of the provision of security comes down to cost. The Sheriff's Department does not have the budget funds for the provision of this additional service, nor does the Recreation Department.

Based on 2022 numbers the estimated cost to provide security at the Recreation Department sanctioned events would be around \$13,825.00. Accounting for growth, the increased number would be \$15,000. This would allow for the 2022 numbers plus an additional 9-night games.

The request is for up to \$15,000 to provided department security for all Recreation Department sanctioned events with the money to only be used for security through the Sheriff's Department.

Recreation Director Landon Sparks addressed the Board regarding the security issues.

Chairman Tapley stated he would like to have more conversation with the sheriff.

Commissioner Davis motioned to approve the request for \$15,000 for added security for all Recreation Department events with the money to only be used for security through the Sheriff's Department.

Commissioner Rowland seconded and the motion carried 5-0.

Planning & Zoning Hearings

Condition Use-Dames Ferry Road

Commissioner Davis motioned to open a public hearing at 6:45 p.m., for a Conditional Use application located at 2982 Dames Ferry Road, map 090 parcel 001.

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

County Manager Jim Hedges presented in Ms. Fortner's absence stating the applicant is requesting a conditional use for a small dog grooming business located at 2982 Dames Ferry Road. Mr. Hedges stated the business is for grooming and bathing only, there will be no kenneling or overnight stays for dogs. The proposal is for a small (4-5 employee maximum) dog grooming salon on an 8-acre tract on Hwy 18.

Mr. Hedges stated initially the business would be operated out of the home and operated by being mobile. Ms. Davis would travel to the applicant's home, and groom or have a dog come to her home.

The building they are proposing would fit in as a storage building if in the future the property was sold and could at that point be used as storage.

Environmental Health has approved this small dog grooming business and a business plan has been submitted.

The property owner is Britton Gates, and the applicant is Chynna Davis.

Mr. Hedges stated the Planning and Zoning Board recommended approval.

No one was present in opposition.

Britton Gates was present for questions from the board on behalf of the application.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to close the public hearing at 6:51 p.m.

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

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to approve the conditional use application.

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

Variance-Strickland Loop

Commissioner Davis motioned to open a public hearing at 6:52 p.m. for a variance application located at 212 Strickland Loop, map 051 054.

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

County Manager Jim Hedges presented in Community Development Director Kelsey Fortner's absence a variance application located at 212 Strickland Loop to place a second home on a 5.28-acre tract and share a driveway. The road frontage is lacking 300' for two homes.

The property owner and applicant are Tanisha Milliken.

Ms. Millikan was present for questions from the Board.

No one was present in opposition.

Mr. Hedges stated the Planning and Zoning Board recommended approval.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to close the public hearing at 7:09 p.m.

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

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to approve the variance application contingent upon the lots being split into two parcels and with dedicated easements to allow access to both parcels.

Chairman Tapley seconded the motion.

Motioned carried 4-1 with Commissioner Emami opposed stating he is opposed to allowing smaller lots than the county's required three-acre minimum.

Smarr Fire Station

Commissioner Rowland stated he had received feedback from the Smarr Community on what to do with the old Smarr Fire Station. Commissioner Rowland stated one option is that it could be donated to the Masonic Lodge and used as community center and voting precinct. Commissioner Rowland stated in the last 36 hours a push from the Smarr Community has been to return it to a clubhouse.

Robert Garner resident of 470 Christian Road, spoke stating he represents the Strict Observance Masonic Lodge No. 18 here in Forsyth. Mr. Garner stated he would like to express the interest of the masonic chapter's interest

in having the building and the property it sits on donated by the county to the non-profit Strict Observance Lodge No. 18.

Adam Tolbert resident of 917 Tucker Road, Macon Georgia, stated he is a member of the Forsyth Masonic Lodge. Mr. Tolbert stated he would not be standing here today if it were not for the Masons. He stated he was born with cerebral palsy but thanks to the Shriners hospital he was able to recently run a 36-mile race.

Yvonne Stuart resident of Hwy 41 South, spoke stating she remembers having her 16th birthday party and worked the polls at the clubhouse prior to it being a fire station. She stated she would like a place for people to have meetings that doesn't cost an arm and a leg.

Ultimately the decision is what is the best for the Smarr community. Would like to table to give community time for additional feedback.

HP Plotter-Surplus

County Manager Jim Hedges stated the county owns a HP Plotter that does not print and only scans. Mr. Hedges stated he reached out to Reach Technologies, Buford, Ga., and it would cost \$870 to have a technician to evaluate the plotter for repair. The Reach representative stated the plotter is obsolete, and no longer supported by HP and indicated that it might be difficult, if not impossible to find parts to repair the machine. Commissioner Ambrose motioned to surplus the HP plotter.

Commissioner Rowland seconded the motion and the motion carried 4-0-1. Commissioner Davis was out of the room during the discussion.

Recreation Department-Gymnasium

County Manager Jim Hedges stated frequently he has provided a current status of the county's application of funds and after completion of the scheduled projects, an estimated \$2.6 million remains. Commissioner Lamarcus Davis has asked that consideration be given to advertise a Design/Build contract for the construction of a new gymnasium at the recreation department. Proform Construction has evaluated the existing facility and indicated it would be too costly to expand the existing building and the more cost-effective approach would be to build over the existing outside courts.

Funds Available	\$10,600,260
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Approved Expenditures

Bolingbroke Fire Station Buildout	(\$199,571)
Animal Services Buildout	(\$94,970)
High Falls Fire Station	(\$1,281,914)
Records Storage Building	(\$357,252)
Master Meters	(\$151,179)

	MCBOC Minutes of February 7, 2023, meeting
	MCBOC Approved February 21, 2023, meeting
North to South Water	(\$3,973,544)
Refrigerator/Incinerator	(\$27,405)
Smarr Fire Station	(\$1,500,000)
Sheriff Training Facility	<u>(\$450,000)</u>
Remaining Funds	\$2,574,425

Following a Board discussion, the Board agreed by general consensus to meet with the Monroe County Schools and the City of Forsyth regarding the expansion of the Recreation facilities.

Monroe County Achievement Center-5K Race

County Manager Jim Hedges state the Monroe County Achievement Center will host a 5K Run on Saturday, March 25, 2023. Commissioner Lamarcus Davis has requested this be placed on the agenda.

Commissioner Davis stated he would like the Board to be a sponsor of the Monroe County Achievement Center 5K race.

Following a Board discussion, Commissioner Davis motioned to use \$500.00 of his discretionary funds to be used toward sponsoring the Monroe County Achievement Center 5K race.

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

Surplus Vehicles

Chairman Greg Tapley stated he had been approached by Sam Marshall of Hudson & Marshall, Inc. auction firm, stating a movie production company was in need of Dodge Chargers and asked if the county had any available.

Chairman Tapley stated the county has two available, a 2018 and a 2019. The board would need to declare these surplus and they would then be sold by sealed bid.

Following a Board discussion, Commissioner Ambrose motioned to surplus the 2018 and 2019 Dodge Chargers and for a minimum bid amount to be set.

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

Commissioners' Comments

Commissioner Rowland stated the Extension Office had brought up a concern that they were not allowed to use the kitchen or downstairs area of the Hubbard Building. He stated he would like to know what the policy is with the Hubbard Building and who maintains it. County Manager Jim Hedges stated he would check on this.

Commissioner Ambrose stated he would like for the Board to get together soon and set the new water rates.

Chairman Tapley stated this was set to be on the agenda for the next meeting.

Commissioner Ambrose stated he would like to resolve the issue with the internet for the citizens that live on the roads that were not covered by the internet service installed by EMC.

Commissioner Ambrose stated there will be a county wide clean up on March 4, 2023, and invites all citizens to participate.

Commissioner Davis stated he would like to see the County and City of Forsyth work together on events and make them bigger and better.

Public Comments

James Beavers resident of 2757 Boxankle Road, stated it is currently Black History Month and would like Monroe County to honor it. He stated his suggestion is to honor the first black commissioner and longest serving commissioner, Larry Evans. He would like for something to honor him in the Administration Building.

Christine Marshall resident of Eatonton Georgia stated she has a tax bill for a breach of covenants. Chairman Tapley stated she should be at the Board of Assessors not the Board of Commissioners.

Executive Session

There was no executive session.

Action from Executive Session

There was no executive session, therefore no action for executive session.

Adjourn

Commissioner Davis motioned to adjourn at 8:14 p.m.

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

Respectively Submitted by:

Janet Abbott, County Clerk