

Monroe County Board of Commissioners

Minutes of May 06, 2025

Regular Meeting

6:00 p.m.

Present:

Alan Gibbs, Chairman

John Ambrose, Vice-Chairman

Lamarcus Davis, District 1

Eddie Rowland, District 2

Al Turner, District 4

Staff:

Jim Hedges, County Manager

Ben Vaughn, County Attorney

Janet Abbott, County Clerk

Richard Dumas, Public Information Officer

Kelsey Fortner, Community Development Manager

Welcome

Chairman Gibbs welcomed everyone in attendance.

Prayer

Pastor Cody Fountain of New Beginning Pentecostal Church gave the invocation.

Pledge

Chairman Gibbs led the Pledge.

Roll Call

County Clerk Janet Abbott called roll.

Call to Order

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

New Business

Approve Agenda

Chairman Gibbs presented the agenda for approval with the following changes, adding the minutes of the April 29, 2025, Called Meeting and moving item J to item D.

Commissioner Davis motioned to approve the agenda with said changes.

Commissioner Turner seconded the motion, and the motion carried 5-0.

Approve Minutes-April 1, 2025, Regular Meeting, April 15, 2025, Regular Meeting, April 29, Called Meeting

Chairman Gibbs presented the minutes of the April 1, 2025, Regular Meeting, April 15, 2025, Regular Meeting, and the April 29, 2025, Called Meeting for approval.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to approve with the normal 30 days for changes.

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

Monroe County Hospital Review

Kerry Trapnell and Casey Fleckenstein gave a report on the first year of operations at the Monroe County Hospital by Aletheia Health Partners. A preview of the first-year results have already been presented to Lorri Robinson, Finance Director, Richard Dumas, Public Information Officer, and Jim Hedges, County Manager.

The hospital has a need for equipment and expenses in 2025 estimated at \$2 million and has obtained loan approval from local banks, provided that Monroe County co-sign the loans. County Attorney Ben Vaughn opined in October 2024 that Monroe County cannot co-sign a traditional loan but can enter into an IGA with the Monroe County Hospital Authority backing the loan.

Volume Statistics:

- Swing bed ADC=14.2, 21% growth from FY23
- ER Visits=5.2% growth from FY23
- Overall, 11% growth from FY23
- Gross Revenue = up by \$3.7 million
- Contract Labor Reduction of \$1.24 million (49% reduction from FY23)
- Cash Collections = 20% growth from FY23
- Operating Profit = \$7,931- 1st operating profit in 7+ years, compared to loss of \$1.8 million in FY23

Goals for this year:

- Improved Data Analytics for even better decision making
- Goal Swing bed ADC of 16.0
- Hire General Surgeon
- Recruit Other Surgeons-Ortho, Cardiology, Etc.
- Grown GA Heart Donations
- Pursue Grants
- Reduce Transfers from ER
- Increase Inpatient Admissions
- Add Specialist Coverage through Telemedicine
- New Electronic Health Record System
- Continue Master Plan Projects
- Open Master Plan Projects
- Continuing Community, state, and federal engagement
- Tear down old hospital and office building-Completed
- Property Beautification projects
- Upgrade Equipment such as 3D Mammography, Operating Room, etc.

Mr. Trapnell stated there are several projects that include building a new hospital that would connect with the current hospital and for at least one other medical office building. Mr. Trapnell stated they are asking the Board of Commissioners to agree to an IGA with the Hospital Authority for the backing of a loan to help with the improvement projects.

Following a Board discussion, Commissioner Ambrose motioned to enter into an IGA with Monroe County Hospital Authority for the backing of a loan.

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

P&Z Hearing-Shirley-Variance-Dames Ferry Road

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to enter into a public hearing at 6:30 p.m. for a Variance application located at 2067 Dames Ferry Road.

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

Community Development Manager Kelsey Fortner presented a Variance application located at 2067 Dames Ferry Road, Map 078 Parcel 027C. The owner/applicant of the property is Richard D Shurley

and Kandice Shurley. The variance is located in A-R and with a lack of road frontage for a second dwelling for a proposed mother-in-law suite.

Details of the application are as follows:

- 1-bedroom mother-in-law suite
- Lack of road frontage
- The mother-in-law suite will be positioned close to the house and slightly in front.
- Environmental Health has approved
- Using existing driveway
- Adjoining property owned by the property owner cannot be used for driveway, is currently in conservation
- No opposition at the Planning and Zoning meeting

Mrs. Fortner stated the Planning and Zoning Board recommendation was for approval.

No one was present in opposition to the request.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to come out of the public hearing at 6:33 p.m.

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

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to approve the application.

Commissioner Turner seconded the motion, and the motion carried 5-0.

Oglethorpe Power Permit Fees

County Manager Jim Hedges stated Oglethorpe Power is gearing up to start their project and have made inquiries relating to permit fees. Our approved fees are as follows:

- Permit fee is calculated by multiplying square footage times \$0.06 per square foot. This fee includes all inspections during the construction process.
- Plan review fee is calculated by multiplying the cost associated with the permit fee times 30%.
- Administrative fee is \$75
- The Permit fee and plan review fees are shared 60% for Charles Abbott Associates, and 40% for Monroe County.

Oglethorpe Power will use Sargent & Lundy, a global leader in engineering and design for the power industry, for all inspections and plan review, and not Charles Abbott Associates, our in-house building inspectors and plan review inspectors. Since we will not be providing building inspections or plan review, we need to adjust our fees, and I recommend the following:

- Permit fee: square footage times \$0.30. Monroe County does not perform any inspections.

- Plan review: no charge since Monroe County will not be involved in the plan review process
- Administrative fee: \$75
- No cost sharing with Charles Abbott

Commissioner Ambrose asked if Sargent & Lundy would be responsible if something is not done correctly.

County Attorney Ben Vaughn replied they will be responsible for certifying to the county that all structures meet the state minimum standards.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to approve the recommendation.

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

Boom Mower Purchase

The initial 2025 Public Works Capital Budget requested funding for a new boom mower to replace a 2006 model that has reached its life expectancy. The Capital Budget request was denied, and it was agreed that Public Works capital expenditures would be funded from TSPLOST.

Public Works is requesting approval to purchase a Massey Ferguson 5700D 4WD Cab Tractor with a Diamond 22' rear cradle boom mower at a cost of \$169,511.51 from Atlantic & Southern.

Two quotes were as follows:

- Atlantic Southern Equipment \$169,511.51
- Tiger Mowers \$176,813.00

Public Works Director Kim Stokes recommends the purchase of the Massey Ferguson from Atlantic Southern in the amount of \$169,511.51 with funding to come from TSPLOST. The dealer has the machine in stock and is ready to deliver. Tiger Mowers has a lead time of 6-8 months.

Commissioner Davis motioned to approve the purchase of the Massey Ferguson from Atlantic Southern in the amount of \$169,511.12 with funding to come from TSPLOST.

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

Conference Center Security Camera System

County Manager Jim Hedges stated the Board previously requested external lighting for the parking areas around the Conference Center, removal of the trees and gazebo to provide additional parking, and the installation of security cameras stemming from events that involved the local police. Lights for the parking areas have been installed, and the trees have been removed. Ray White is ready to remove the gazebo; however, he is evaluating options as to where the gazebo can be re-located. Boyd Elrod has designed a security camera system that was engineered to cover all ingress and egress points as well as

the exterior parking and pedestrian areas. The cost for the security camera system, including installation is \$77,816 and funds are available in the 2020 SPLOST fund.

Commissioner Davis motioned to approve the purchase and installation of security cameras at the Conference Center in the amount of \$77,816 with funding to come from the 2020 SPLOST fund.

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

Alcohol License

Community Development Director Kelsey Fortner presented an Alcohol License for approval. Mrs. Fortner stated the application is for a new restaurant, The Iron Rail, and the location is 5995 HWY 41 South in Bolingbroke. The applicant is Johnny Watson. Mrs. Fortner stated the applicant is requesting a beer and wine license and all the appropriate steps have been taken and approved. This is for a new establishment all together.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to approve.

Commissioner Turner seconded the motion, and the motion carried 5-0.

Subdivision Plat

Community Development Manager Kelsey Fortner presented a plat application for a subdivision plat change. Mrs. Fortner stated the Juliette Road plat was approved originally by the Board of Commissioners in March of 2021. The property owner is requesting to divide 2.73 acres of the 9.43-acre tract, combine it with lot 5 with 1.03 acres. The lots are residential and comply with Zoning. Mrs. Fortner stated the Board must approve the lot line change since the plat was originally approved by the Board.

The address of the project is 1441 Juliette Road, Map 065 parcel 035. The owner/applicant of the property is Estes Road Holdings.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to approve the Subdivision Plat change.

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

P&Z Hearing-Roush-Variance-Juliette Road

County Attorney Ben Vaughn explained that the proposed application does not need to go through the Zoning process for approval. Mr. Vaughn stated the property is located on a county road and the proposed driveway/road is on the applicant's property therefore Board approval is not necessary. Mr. Vaughn stated the application could be handled administratively.

Commissioner Ambrose stated he disagrees, and he doesn't know why the applicant couldn't build a driveway off the front of the property on Juliette Road. Commissioner Ambrose stated the property

owners in the subdivision paid for the road when they bought the lots and should have some say about whether a driveway is allowed.

Public Comments

Reginald Harris, resident of 16 Forsyth Landing Blvd stated the location of the house they intend to build is over a mile from the applicant's house and he doesn't understand the need to satisfy one person when a group of many are against it.

Kate Wesson, resident of Forsyth Landing Drive, stated she doesn't understand why this is being dismissed. Ms. Wesson stated she also doesn't understand why they are asking for a 60-foot driveway easement and the residents of Forsyth Landing Subdivision have a petition with 31 signatures opposed to the application.

Brandon and Chandra Brown, residents of 1214 Forsyth Landing Drive, stated they are not sure why they aren't grandfathered in. Ms. Brown stated the actual facts of the case are not what they have heard and feel as though it has been misrepresented. The Browns stated they feel as though this is opening the door for multiple homes to be built and asked if the new home being built would have a Forsyth Landing address.

Quinton Moore, resident of 1315 Forsyth Landing Drive, stated he lives directly across the street, and he will be impacted by the action from this application. Mr. Moore stated if she wants to put her father on the other end of the property it should have a Forsyth Landing address so that they have to abide by the Forsyth Landing Subdivision covenants. Mr. Moore stated the utilities are already located on the back side of the property and he feels as though the applicant has an ulterior motive.

Lee Major, resident of 13 Forsyth Landing Boulevard, stated the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few. Mr. Major stated when he moved here for work, he chose the Forsyth Landing Subdivision because it was a cul-de-sac. Mr. Major stated he retired in 2015 and decided to stay. Mr. Major stated the Board should take into consideration the wants of the 30 residents that have signed the petition in opposition. Mr. Major stated no decision is a decision.

Rob Law, resident of Lassiter Road, stated when the Forsyth Landing Subdivision was created there was every intention of there being a phase 2, but the developers went bankrupt. Mr. Law stated now someone has bought the property and has relieved the residents of having another subdivision there. Mr. Law stated this property owner should be able to use its property and the Board should not allow the desires of the crowd to overrule the county's zoning laws.

George Vetter stated he has been in the surveying business for 40 years and has never seen a driveway cut into a subdivision like this. Mr. Vetter stated he is proud of the way the subdivision has come together.

Natalie Summer, resident of Forsyth Landing, stated there is already a road off Juliette Road that accesses the back side of the property, and she just wants to make sure the applicant is not creating an extra access point for future development.

The Board recognized **Boy Scout Troop 21** from Macon's Martha Bowman Church that was in attendance. Troup Leader Chip Greene stated the boys were working on their communications merit badge by attending a government meeting.

Commissioners' Comments

District 1 Lamarcus Davis

Commissioner Davis thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and expressing their concerns.

Commissioner Davis stated there is some confusion with the 60-foot driveway and with the address that needs to be worked out.

District 2 Eddie Rowland

Commissioner Rowland had no additional comments.

District 3 John Ambrose

Commissioner Ambrose stated he agrees with the opposition to the Forsyth Landing driveway.

Commissioner Ambrose stated he couldn't see a driveway being installed through one of the back roads of River Forest. Commissioner Ambrose stated it has been a good year, and he sees good things coming in the future and is looking forward to them. Commissioner Ambrose thanked Boy Scout Troup 21 for coming.

District 4 Al Turner

Commissioner Turner stated he is opposition to the variance on Juliette Road, and he wouldn't want someone cutting a back road in the back of his subdivision.

Chairman Alan Gibbs

Chairman Gibbs thanked everyone for showing up for the application. Chairman Gibbs stated he understands this is not what everyone wanted to hear but he appreciates the unity of the subdivision and is going to have some additional conversation with the County Attorney.

Executive Session- (Real Estate)

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to enter executive session for Real Estate at 7:30 p.m.

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

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to come out of the executive session at 7:35 p.m.

Chairman Gibbs seconded the motion, and the motion carried 5-0.

Action from Executive Session

County Attorney Ben Vaughn stated the Board discussed a Real Estate matter and no action was taken.

Adjourn

Commissioner Davis motioned to adjourn at 7:37 p.m.

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

Respectively Submitted by:

Janet Abbott, County Clerk