

Monroe County Board of Commissioners

Minutes of October 1, 2025

Workshop

8:00 A.M.

Present:

Alan Gibbs, Chairman

John Ambrose, Vice-Chairman

Lamarcus Davis, District 1-Not Present

Eddie Rowland, District 2-Not Present

Al Turner, District 4

Staff:

Jim Hedges, County Manager

Lorri Robinson, Finance Director/Deputy County Manager

Ben Vaughn, County Attorney

Janet Abbott, County Clerk

Richard Dumas, Public Information Officer

Welcome

Chairman Gibbs welcomed everyone in attendance.

Prayer

Chairman Gibbs 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 8:00 a.m.

New Business

Approve Agenda

Chairman Gibbs presented the agenda for approval

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to approve the agenda.

Commissioner Turner seconded the motion, and the motion carried 3-0.

Comprehensive Plan-Laura Mathis-Middle Georgia Regional Commission

Laura Mathis, Executive Director of the Middle Georgia Regional Commission spoke regarding the purpose of the meeting today.

Ms. Mathis discussed the Comprehensive Plan for Monroe County, last updated in 2022, focusing on economic development, tourism, recreational infrastructure, and public safety. Key points included the completion of a new data center, a 420,000 sq. ft. automobile warehouse, and new basketball courts. The county faces growth challenges, with a moratorium on large subdivisions and ongoing road improvements. Public safety upgrades included new fire stations and equipment. Broadband connectivity is improving, with 95% of residents connected. The land use map needs updating to reflect current developments.

Action Items addressed during the meeting:

- Explore opportunities to collaborate with the city on addressing housing needs and expanding sewer capacity.
- Continue monitoring and addressing staffing and infrastructure needs for public safety and community facilities as the county grows.
- Coordinate with Mercer University's Rural Health Innovation Center to leverage research and insights for improving healthcare services.
- Maintain progress on broadband expansion efforts to ensure all residents have access to high-speed internet.
- Review and update the county's land use map and zoning to reflect current development trends and priorities.

Comprehensive Plan Overview and Mid-Year Check-In

- Ms. Mathis explained the state requirement for a Comprehensive Plan involving the County, City of Forsyth, and City of Culloden, with a five-year update process.
- The state recommends a mid-year check-in to assess implementation and identify upcoming projects.
- Ms. Mathis mentioned the release of the Regional Commission's 60th annual report, highlighting past achievements and organizational history.
- Brandon Fambro, Community Development Specialist with the Middle Georgia Regional Commission discussed the last update of the Comprehensive Plan in 2022, focusing on economic development goals, including industrial development, workforce expansion, and tourism opportunities.

Economic Development and Tourism Industry Updates

- County Manager Jim Hedges highlighted recent industrial developments, including a new data center and an automobile warehouse.
- Mr. Fambro inquired about tourism, industry development, and Chairman Gibbs mentioned a \$20,000 donation to boost tourism in various county areas.
- Recreation Director Landon Sparks provided updates on recreational infrastructure, including new basketball courts and a covered arena, to attract more tournaments and events.

Natural and Cultural Resources and Recreational Opportunities

- Mr. Fambro discussed the need for additional recreational space and opportunities, mentioning collaborating with Monroe County for a Land and Water Conservation Fund grant.
- Mr. Sparks provided updates on basketball court replacements and the construction of a new horse arena.
- Chairman Gibbs mentioned a moratorium on large subdivisions to manage growth and protect the county's natural character.

Community Facilities and Services

- Mr. Fambro discussed the goal of offering high-quality utilities and expanding services to residents in need.

- Commissioner Ambrose mentioned the completion of the Juliette water project, providing new water services to residents.
- County Manager Jim Hedges spoke about purchasing a million-dollar pumping station and connecting northern customers to the City of Forsyth's water supply and purchasing water from the City of Forsyth.
- Chairman Gibbs and Public Works Director Kim Stokes discussed road improvements and the impact of the T-SPLOST on transportation projects.
- The Board discussed making the Library ADA compliant, expanding the jail, and the ongoing discussion of impact fees, advancing housing opportunities, and the increased building permit applications.

Commissioner Davis entered the meeting at 8:25 a.m.

Public Safety and Health Services

- EMS Chief Matt Jackson provided updates on public safety capital improvements, including new fire stations and upgraded equipment.
- Commissioner Davis mentioned ongoing improvements at Monroe County Hospital.
- Mr. Fambro inquired about collaboration with Mercer University's Rural Health Innovation Center, and Commissioner Davis confirmed ongoing efforts.

Broadband Access and Land Use

- Commissioner Ambrose discussed the goal of ensuring all residents have access to high-speed internet and the challenges of connecting the last mile.
- Ms. Mathis mentioned the county's leadership in broadband access and ongoing efforts to secure funding.
- Community Development Director Kelsey Fortner talked about the need to update the land use map to reflect current economic developments and infrastructure needs.
- Ms. Mathis explained the differences between the land use map and the zoning map, emphasizing the importance of aligning them.

Regional Plan and Public Comments

- Aiden Leahy Community Development Specialist with the Regional Commission provided an overview of the regional plan, which aims to address common issues across jurisdictions.
- Mr. Leahy mentioned the upcoming five-year planning cycle for the Monroe County Comprehensive Plan and the need for community engagement.
- Mr. Leahy highlighted the availability of the regional plan on the website for further review.
- Ms. Mathis thanked the participants for their updates and offered assistance from the Regional Commission to improve the county.

Commissioner Comments

- Chairman Gibbs thanked the Regional Commission for their work and the department heads for their presentations.
- Commissioner Ambrose expressed optimism about the county's future with incoming revenue and ongoing improvements.
- Ms. Mathis mentioned the development pressures faced by other counties in the region, such as Houston and Putnam.
- Mr. Stokes added a final comment on the replacement of a bridge on Old Brent Road, completing a significant transportation project.

Adjourn

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to adjourn at 8:51 a.m.

Commissioner Davis seconded the motion, and the motion carried 4-0.

Respectively Submitted by:

Janet Abbott, County Clerk