

Monroe County Board of Commissioners

Minutes of January 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:

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

Bill Wilson with Russellville Baptist 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.

Proclamation-FFA-Forestry Team-National Championship

The Monroe County Board of Commissioners proclaimed January 6, 2026, as Mary Persons Future Farmers of America (FFA) Appreciation Day in recognition of the outstanding achievements of the 2025 Mary Persons FFA programs.

The proclamation commends the Mary Persons FFA Forestry Team for earning a back-to-back national championship at the 2025 National FFA Championship in Indianapolis, achieving the highest team score, and placing all four members among the top seven individuals nationally. Individual honors included national top rankings in Tree Identification and Wood Products Identification.

The Board also recognized the Mary Persons FFA Nursery Landscape Development Team for placing 10th nationally and earning multiple Gold and Silver individual ratings at the same competition.

The proclamation extends congratulations to the students and FFA advisors and directs that a copy of the resolution be transmitted to the advisors and participating students.

Proclamation-8 Under Football Team-Runner-Up National Championship

The Monroe County Board of Commissioners proclaimed January 6, 2026, as 8U Monroe County Bulldogs Football Champions Day in recognition of the team's exceptional accomplishments during the 2025 season.

The proclamation recognizes the 8U Monroe County Bulldogs for completing a perfect 10–0 league season, winning the CGYSA “Super Bowl” championship with a 22–6 victory, and capturing their third consecutive CGYSA championship, achieving a 30–0 league record over that span. The team also competed at the AAU “Battle at the Beach” National Tournament in Panama City Beach, Florida, finishing with a 2–2 record against teams from Georgia, Florida, and Tennessee.

The Board congratulated the players, coaches, and staff for representing Monroe County with class and enthusiasm and directed that a copy of the proclamation be transmitted to the Monroe County Recreation Department Director Landon Sparks and the 8U Bulldogs head coach Antarius Jones.

2025 Community Service Awards

The following citizens were presented with Community Service Awards by each Commissioner. The awards are recognizing citizens for going above and beyond in our community.

- **District 1-Lamarcus Davis-Restoring Life Global Ministries**
- **District 2-Eddie Rowland-Nathan Jackson**
- **District 3-John Ambrose-Johnathan Watson**
- **District 4-Al Turner-Betty Eskew**

- **Chairman-Alan Gibbs-Tiffany Bertram**

The Board took a 5-minute break prior to the regular meeting starting to allow citizens to exit if the chose.

New Business

Approve Agenda

Chairman Gibbs presented the agenda for approval with the following changes: adding under C, Finance Director/Deputy County Manager Lorri Robinson-Byrd for personnel and the addition of executive session.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to approve the agenda.

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

Minutes-December 16, 2025, Regular Meeting & December 17, 2025, Called meeting

Chairman Gibbs presented the minutes of the December 16, 2025, Regular Meeting and the December 17, 2025, Called Meeting for approval.

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

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

County Clerk Appointment

The Monroe County Enabling legislation requires the annual appointment of a County Clerk. The current county Clerk, Janet Abbott, is an 18 plus year employee and is a Certified County Clerk by the University of Georgia Carl Vinson Institute of Government. Additionally, Mrs. Abbott is a certified Human Resources Manager by the University of Georgia Association of County Commissioners of Georgia.

Mrs. Abbott is an outstanding County Clerk/Human Resources Director, and her reappointment is highly recommended.

Chairman Gibbs motioned to approve the reappointment of Janet Abbott as County Clerk.

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

Finance Director Introduction

Finance Director/Deputy County Manager Lorri Robinson-Byrd briefly introduced Angie Sorrow as Monroe County's new Finance Director. Angie started the day before this meeting and brings 35+ years of governmental experience from Henry County, where she worked in multiple areas including courts, finance, purchasing, HR, and administration with county commissioners. She most recently served as Deputy/Assistant Director of Financial Services. Angie has held leadership roles in GGFOA (including

President and conference event coordinator), served with Leadership Henry, and helped launch the Henry County Citizen Academy. She is married to Donnie and has three adult sons. Mrs. Robinson-Byrd expressed enthusiasm about Angie joining Monroe County's team.

Forsyth-Monroe County Chamber of Commerce Appointment

Monroe County's appointed representative to the Forsyth-Monroe County Chamber of Commerce is Chairman Gibbs. His term expired on December 31, 2025, and a new representative is required. This is a one-year appointment.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to approve Alan Gibbs' reappointment to the Forsyth-Monroe County Chamber of Commerce.

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

Monroe County Hospital Authority Appointment

Stan Hall's term on the Monroe County Hospital Authority expired on December 31, 2025. The hospital administrator, Casey Fleckenstein, spoke with Mr. Hall, and he would like to be reappointed for another five-year term.

Commissioner Davis motioned to approve the appointment of Stan Hall to the Monroe County Hospital Authority for a five-year term.

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

Planning & Zoning Board Appointments

Each Commissioner appoints a representative to the Planning & Zoning Board. These are one-year appointments. Current appointments are as follows:

- Chairman-Mitchell Bunce
- District 1 appointee-Shamika Myrick
- District 2 appointee-Chris Patterson
- District 3 appointee-Chuck Benson
- District 4 appointee-Jim Peters

The Board of Commissioners, each need to appoint a representative from their district to the Planning & Zoning Board.

Chairman Gibbs motioned to reappoint Mitchell Bunce to the Planning & Zoning Board.

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

Commissioner Turner motioned to appoint Jason Dorsey to the Planning & Zoning Board.

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

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to reappoint Shamika Myrick, Chris Patterson, and Chuck Benson to the Planning & Zoning Board.

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

These appointments are for a one-year term.

Recreation Board Appointments

Each Commissioner appoints a representative to the Recreation Board. These are two-year appointments. Current appointments that expired on December 31, 2025, are as follows:

Chairman appointee-Kenneth Mantle

District 1 appointee-Marecha Gaines

District 2 appointee-Ron Shipman, Sr.

District 3 appointee-Stan Starr

District 4 appointee-Douglas Leknes

The Board of Commissioners each need to appoint a representative from their district to the Recreation Board.

Chairman Gibbs motioned to reappoint all current appointees of the Monroe County Recreation Board for a one-year term.

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

Two Rivers RC&D Appointments

Monroe County representatives on the Two Rivers RC&D are Kimbel Stokes, voting member, and Gary Futch. These are one-year appointments that expired on December 31, 2025, and recommend both be reappointed to a second term.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to reappoint Kimbel Stokes and Gary Futch to the Two Rivers RC&D.

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

Public Comment

Chairman Gibbs read the "Public Access to Meetings Ordinance-Section 7 (Decorum).

Priscilla Doster clarified the significance of the MP FFA forestry team's achievement. She explained that:

- The team won state and national championships two years in a row.
- Under FFA rules, students who are on a state-winning team cannot compete again.

- Therefore, the first year's championship was won by one group of four young men, and the second years by a different group of four young men.

She emphasized that this shows how exceptional the agriculture teachers and program are, since two entirely different teams were able to win both state and national titles in consecutive years.

Commissioner's Comments

Commissioner Lamarcus Davis – District 1

- Wished everyone a Happy New Year and expressed gratitude to continue serving.
- Hopes 2026 will be better than 2025, emphasizing teamwork among commissioners and continued hard work for the county.
- Asked everyone to keep families in prayer, noting personal hardship: he will be burying his wife's grandmother tomorrow, making the meeting emotionally difficult for him.
- Reminded everyone of the ribbon cutting for the new Gymnasium at the Recreation Department on Saturday January 3rd at 9:00 a.m.

Commissioner Eddie Rowland – District 2

- Shared personal news: he became a grandfather again, welcoming his first grandson the previous day.
- Reported on a data center webinar with a wide range of state and local leaders (DCA, Public Service Commission, environmental and civic groups, officials from other counties and states).
- Key theme: information about data centers changes rapidly, making communication with the public difficult; even state regulators struggle to keep up.
- Stressed that the board's top priority is protecting and taking care of Monroe County citizens, asking residents to be patient as they work through evolving data center issues while aiming for transparency.

Commissioner John Ambrose – District 3

- As a Navy veteran, praised the U.S. military and recent actions involving Venezuela, saying the operation showed the military is highly trained and effective.
- Hopes positive change there will eventually influence Colombia and Cuba, improving stability in the Western Hemisphere and security for the U.S.
- Wished everyone a good Christmas and New Year and looked forward to a prosperous year for the county.
- Discussed data center and annexation issues:

- Noted conflicting information about water usage estimates and concern that the county has no real say because of annexation by a neighboring jurisdiction.
- Criticized the state’s annexation laws as unfair to Monroe County residents near the site.
- Highlighted responsiveness of county staff: after he reported three water leaks over the weekend, they were fixed by Monday, and he urged citizens to report leaks because they affect county finances.

Commissioner Al Turner – District 4

- Thanked attendees and hoped everyone had a blessed Christmas and New Year.
- Expressed optimism for a “merry New Year” in the county and a desire to be actively involved in improvements.
- Invited constituents to call him with district issues, promising to return calls if he misses them.
- Publicly thanked county staff (including “the judges”) for being responsive when contacted and complimented a particular individual as a “very fine person.”

Chairman Alan Gibbs – Chairman (Countywide)

- Reflected that this was his first meeting of this kind, focused heavily on recognitions and positive achievements, and said it was refreshing.
- Observed there are many deserving people in the community, making the choice of honorees difficult.
- Praised the school system, teachers, and students, especially those involved in the FFA successes; highlighted a teacher who drove the school bus to Indianapolis as an example of dedication.
- Noted the county is “full of good people” and that many meetings focus on tense issues, so this positive, celebratory meeting—with kids present, full audience, applause, and smiles—was especially meaningful to him.

Executive Session

Commissioner Davis motioned to enter executive session for personnel at 6:53 p.m.

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

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to close executive session at 7:09 p.m.

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

Action from Executive Session

County Attorney Ben Vaughn stated a personnel matter was discussed and no action was needed at this time by the board.

Adjourn

Commissioner Davis motioned to adjourn at 7:11 p.m.

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

Respectively Submitted by:

Janet Abbott, County Clerk