Monroe County Board of Commissioners

Minutes of June 02, 2026

Regular Meeting

6:00 P.M.

Present:

Alan Gibbs, Chairman

John Ambrose, Vice-Chairman

Lamarcus Davis, District 1-Phone in

Eddie Rowland, District 2

Al Turner, District 4

Staff:

Lorri Byrd, County Manager

Ben Vaughn, County Attorney

Janet Abbott, County Clerk

Richard Dumas, Public Information Officer

Kim Stokes, Public Works Director

Kelsey Fortner, Community Development Director

Angie Sorrow, Finance Director

Welcome

Chairman Gibbs welcomed everyone in attendance.

Prayer

Chairman Gibbs led 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 addition of the old High Falls Fire Station as item G.

Commissioner Turner motioned to approve the agenda with said changes.

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

Minutes-May 19, 2026, Regular Meeting

Chairman Gibbs presented the minutes of the May 19, 2026, Regular Meeting for approval.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to approve the minutes of May 19, 2026, meeting with the normal 30 days for changes.

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

Town Creek Road-Public Hearing

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to enter a public hearing at 6:03 p.m. for a rezoning request located on Town Creek Road.

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

Community Development Director Kelsey Fortner presented a rezoning request located on Town Creek Road, map 053 parcel 049. The property owner/applicant is Charles E. Dumas. Mrs. Fortner stated the applicant is asking to rezone 18.86-acres from agricultural-residential to Light Manufacturing (Industrial). Mrs. Fortner stated the rezoning is consistent with the adjacent parcels on Town Creek Road. Mrs. Fortner stated the location is in what is considered an industrial park off Hwy 83 N, most of which is already zoned industrial.

Mrs. Fortner stated the Planning & Zoning recommended approval with a 45’ vegetative buffer from the Juliette Crossing Subdivision’s back property line.

Most of the businesses have a date range from 1972-1995.

The applicant’s son Jesse Dumas was present on behalf of the application. Mr. Dumas stated he is here representing his father but lives in Tallahassee.

Mr. Dumas stated the following:

- Property has been in family for 76 years; historically used for dairy cows and hay, no longer actively farmed due to surrounding residential and commercial development.
- Parcel is now bordered by residential on one side and commercial/industrial on others; family believes agricultural use is no longer the highest and best use.

- Seeks zoning consistent with other industrial parcels on Town Creek Road, to allow sale for similar uses.
- Explained:
    - Family donated land for the water treatment plant and access road; the road is public but deeded to and maintained by the City of Forsyth.

Multiple Juliette Crossing residents spoke in opposition:

- **April Gilstrap (5307 Felles Way):**
    - Home directly borders subject parcel.
    - Chose the house for rural character, privacy, and mature trees at rear.
    - Opposes industrial zoning immediately behind homes, citing:
        - Noise, rodent, and code enforcement issues associated with existing industrial further down the road.
        - Concerns over property values and quality of life.
    - Submitted:
        - Photographs, flash drive with drone video, and petition with 25 signatures from neighbors in opposition.
    - Requested:
        - Denial of rezoning; if approved, require:
            - Existing tree buffer to remain intact.
            - At least 100-ft protective buffer between homes and any industrial use.
- **Josh Gilstrap (5307 Felles Way):**
    - Took the drone footage presented.
    - Described:
        - Existing tree line between homes and the water plant as essential for privacy and enjoyment of backyards (including pools and outdoor areas).
        - Industrial area further down Town Creek Road as containing junk trailers and unsightly storage.

- Argued:
  - Rezoning would devalue many homes and materially change what residents see from their yards.
- **Nick Cornall (Cornwall Road):**
  - Emphasized concern about long-term implications (20–50 years):
    - Once zoned M-1, future owners have a wide range of industrial uses available.
  - Requested that, if rezoning approved:
    - A permanent, recorded buffer be required:
      - Preserves existing tree line.
      - Prohibits clear-cutting.
      - Runs with the land as a restrictive condition to protect existing neighborhood.
- **Rob Law- (Lassiter Road):**
  - Referenced the Comprehensive Plan and mixed-use designation.
  - Noted large nearby tracts (400+ and 600+ acres) likely suitable for future residential development to meet population projections.
  - Suggested:
    - Rezoning this tract to industrial may be inconsistent with long-term residential growth needs.
    - The power line and road bisecting the parcel may limit its usefulness as industrial.
  - Recommended the Board deny rezoning, anticipating possible future annexation and residential development via the city.

Jesse Dumas rebuttable

- Clarified his estimate of how many homes directly abut the property versus those further away.
- Noted many of the older, unsightly industrial operations have been there decades; newer businesses tend to be better maintained.

Board discussed:

- Interpretation of mixed use (staff indicated could involve apartments, townhomes, or residential over commercial).
- Potential that leaving the parcel as mixed use could allow multifamily housing, which some commissioners opposed more strongly than light industrial.
- Orientation of any future building relative to the road and how that affects which side is the rear setback.
- Whether a privacy fence could be encouraged in addition to the vegetative buffer.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to close the public hearing at 6:40 p.m.
Commissioner Turner seconded the motion, and the motion carried 5-0.
Commissioner Ambrose motioned to go with the P & Z recommendation to approve the rezoning for the 18.86 acres with condition:

1.) A 45-ft vegetative buffer be maintained (of existing vegetation) within the current buffer required by Planning & Zoning, along the property bordering Juliette Crossing.

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

Ray Hartley Road Water Main Extension

Public Works Director Kim Stokes presented the Ray Hartley Road Water Main Extension bid tabulation and recommendations to award the bid to the lowest bidder, Roberts Hauling & Pipeline Construction. The construction project will be fully reimbursable to Monroe County from Oglethorpe Power Company through a pending agreement.
Mr. Stokes stated Carter Engineering Group had reviewed the bids received and a total of 13 bids were submitted.
The following bids were received and listed from lowest to highest:

Rank	Contractor	Bid Amount
1	Roberts Hauling & Pipeline Construction, Inc.	$297,015.00
2	Sikes Underground	$344,246.50
3	Pyles Plumbing & Utility Contractors, Inc.	$370,686.00
4	Matthews Development Corporation	$457,689.60
5	Helix Grading and Utility, LLC	$487,125.00
6	John R. Walker, Inc.	$543,339.50

Rank	Contractor	Bid Amount
7	RDJE, Inc.	$539,316.00
8	FS Scarbrough, LLC	$573,631.26
9	DPC Services	$563,801.25
10	Crawford Grading and Pipeline, Inc.	$592,998.00
11	Site Engineering, Inc.	$697,700.00
12	Mark Turner Grading, Inc.	$709,217.50
13	Ohmshiv Construction, LLC	$1,162,935.00

Roberts Hauling & Pipeline Construction submitted the lowest responsive bid at $297,015.00. The engineer reviewed the bids and determined that the amount is consistent with the project scope. Carter Engineering Group recommends awarding the construction contract to Roberts Hauling & Pipeline for $297,015.00.

Carter Engineering Group recommends that the contract award be contingent upon:

- A fully executed agreement between Monroe County and Oglethorpe Power Company, or
- A formal letter of intent from OPC acknowledging its commitment to reimburse Monroe County for the design and construction costs.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to approve Public Works Director Kim Stokes recommendation to award the bid to Roberts Hauling & Pipeline for $297,015.00. Commissioner Rowland seconded the motion and the motion carried 5-0.

Comprehensive Planning Services

County Manager Lorri Byrd stated Goodwyn Mills Cawood (GMC) attended the May 5, 2026, Board of Commissioners meeting to present their services to prepare a comprehensive land use plan. GMC has prepared a proposal for Monroe County to contract with their firm to assist in the preparation of a comprehensive land use plan. This is the only proposal we have received from a professional contractor for this service. Staff and legislative body have searched and have been unsuccessful in finding another company that will provide this type of service for Monroe County. GMC's proposal includes project management, community engagement, plan development, action planning, and preparation of final adoption documents.

Task	Description	Fee
Administration	Project Administration	$37,920
Task 1	Existing Conditions, Community Assessment & Visioning	$36,640
Task 2	Public Participation & Community Engagement	$44,320
Task 3	Comprehensive Plan Development	$40,320
Task 4	Community Work Program & Action Plan	$23,120
Task 5	Draft Deliverables and Final Product for Review & Adoption	$20,960
	Professional Services Subtotal	**$203,280**
	Expenses (Travel, Printing & Materials)	**$6,500**
.	**Total Proposal Fee**	**$209,780**

Mrs. Byrd stated the proposal anticipates completion by about October 2027, depending on both GMC's and the County's availability and level of engagement.

Mrs. Byrd stated during the recent auction for county surplus total auction proceeds were about $216,890, after 10% commission and costs, the net proceeds are around $183,000. Mrs. Byrd recommended using the auction proceeds to fund most of the comprehensive plan cost to minimize the use of contingency or fund balance.

Commissioners discussed the importance of:

- A professional, detailed land use plan to:
  - Guide zoning decisions and future land use.
  - Support comprehensive planning and service delivery strategy (fire/EMS, law enforcement, recreation, roads, etc.).
  - Anticipate impacts of population growth, interstate traffic, and development patterns.
  - Providing the County Attorney with a strong legal foundation for defending zoning decisions and limiting ad-hoc variances.
  - Improving on prior planning efforts with regional commissions, which were described as more of a "check-the-box" exercise.
  - The land use plan is the fundamental basis for the overall comprehensive plan and for siting fire stations, sheriff patrol, and recreation facilities where future growth will occur.
  - The need for a consistent, county-wide approach so that zoning decisions are applied fairly across all districts.

Chairman Gibbs motioned to approve to contract with Goodwyn Mills Carwood (GMC) for the preparation of a comprehensive land use plan at the proposed not to exceed cost of $209,000 to be funded primarily from auction proceeds.

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

Impact Fee Services

County Manager Lorri Byrd stated Ross Planning and Associates has prepared an impact fee study proposal for Monroe County.

Ross Planning Associates submitted a proposal to develop a comprehensive Impact Fee Program for Monroe County, including all required studies, calculations, planning documents, ordinances, and implementation assistance.

Proposal Options

Option 1 – $66,215

Includes impact fee calculations and program development for:

- Library
- Parks & Recreation
- EMS & Fire Protection
- Sheriff's Office
- Animal Services
- Road Improvements

Option 2 – $59,600

Includes:

- Parks & Recreation
- EMS & Fire Protection
- Sheriff's Office
- Road Improvements

Scope of Services

Ross Planning Associates will:

- Provide guidance on impact fee requirements and administration.
- Assist with creation of an Impact Fee Advisory Committee.
- Prepare an Impact Fee Methodology Report with all required fee calculations.

- Develop a Capital Improvements Element (CIE) for inclusion in the County Comprehensive Plan.
- Draft an Impact Fee Ordinance compliant with Georgia law.
- Prepare fee schedules for adoption.
- Develop administrative procedures and implementation guidance.
- Assist staff with fee collection, accounting, and reporting requirements.
- Provide up to one year of post-implementation support.

Key Project Tasks

1. **Project Kickoff & Data Collection**
   - Gather facility inventories, capital plans, budgets, tax data, SPLOST information, debt schedules, and growth projections.
   - Coordinate with County departments.
2. **Public and Advisory Committee Process**
   - Assist with formation of the Impact Fee Advisory Committee.
   - Conduct required public hearing and public outreach activities.
3. **Impact Fee Methodology Report**
   - Develop population, housing, and employment forecasts through 2050.
   - Establish level-of-service standards.
   - Identify future capital improvement needs.
   - Calculate maximum allowable impact fees and required tax credits.
4. **Capital Improvements Element (CIE)**
   - Identify growth-related capital projects through 2050.
   - Prepare required 5-year Community Work Program.

Timeline

- Estimated project duration: approximately 10 months, including state and regional review periods.

Financial Considerations

- The study cost is expected to be reimbursable through future impact fee collections.
- Current General Fund operations have sufficient funds available to cover the study cost upfront.
-

Recommended Action

- Determine whether to proceed with Option 1 or Option 2.
- Consider authorization to engage Ross Planning Associates to begin development of the County's Impact Fee Program.
- **Supportive points:**
    - Several commissioners stressed that:
        - Monroe County expects substantial population and commercial growth and must plan how to fund the added demand on services.
        - Impact fees are a way for newcomers to “buy in” to systems existing residents have funded for years.
        - Long-term goal is to lower property taxes (e.g., expand homestead exemptions, potentially reduce or eliminate taxes for seniors), and impact fees could help offset revenue needs and manage growth.
        - A later informal analysis (referenced during comments) suggested that if impact fees had been in place for recent large projects (e.g., Buc-ee’s, other Rumble Road development, data centers) and recent home construction, the County could have collected millions of dollars in impact fees.
- **Concerns raised:**
    - Some commissioners voiced concern that impact fees:
        - Function like a “prepaid tax” on new homes and could burden local families building within the County.
        - May not be financially critical given expected revenue from other sources, especially for smaller per-home amounts.
    - There was acknowledgment that a previous impact fee effort several years ago:
        - Cost the County to complete a study.
        - Was ultimately not implemented after public opposition.
- **Public sentiment (from show of hands and later comments):**
    - Residents in attendance were split:
        - Some strongly in favor of impact fees to help manage growth and relieve pressure on services and schools.

        - Others opposed, viewing them as unfair to new residents and duplicative of tools the County already has through zoning and subdivision approvals.

Clarifications

- Commissioners and staff emphasized:
    - The vote at this meeting is only to authorize the study.
    - No impact fee schedule or ordinance is being adopted now.
    - After the study, the Board will hold further discussions and must take a separate vote to adopt any impact fees, including:
        - Specific dollar amounts by land use type.
        - Eligible uses and capital projects.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to authorize the contract with Bill Ross and Associates to perform an Impact Fee Study using Option 2.

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

Old High Falls Fire Station

County Manager Lorri Byrd reported that a bid was received on the Old High Falls Fire Station building/property located at 3901 High Falls Road at auction on May 30, 2026, but remains contingent upon approval by the Board of Commissioners.

Upon approval, the transaction will proceed through a standard real estate closing process with an anticipated closing date on or before June 30, 2026.

Steve Slocumb with Hudson and Marshall Auctioneers advised that he was present to answer any questions regarding the transaction. Original contract documents were made available for execution by the appropriate parties upon Board approval.

County Attorney Ben Vaughn advised that he would provide the information necessary to complete the transaction, including fees associated with the preparation of quitclaim deeds for the remaining auctioned parcels. Final documentation will be distributed once auction proceeds have cleared the trust account.

Full Auction results are as follows:

Real Estate Auction (May 30, 2026)

Property	**Bid Price**
3901 High Falls Road (Fire Station)	$74,000.00

Property	Bid Price
11.2 Acres – Corner of Unionville Rd	$20,500.00
2.3 Acres – Lot 10 Towaliga South Rd	$12,000.00
7.46 Acres – Hwy 87	$20,000.00
3.4 Acres – Lot 18 Walton Way	$6,250.00
0.85 Acre Portion of Lot 22 Pioneer Trail	$3,200.00

Total Real Estate Sales: $135,950.00

Additional Fees Collected

- Buyer's Premiums (10%): **$13,595.00**
- Deed Preparation Fees: **$877.50**

Total Real Estate Transaction Value: $150,422.50

Equipment Auction (May 30, 2026)

Item	Sale Price
2021 Dodge Charger (s/n 5175)	$1,000.00
2019 Dodge Charger (s/n 6060)	$4,000.00
2019 Dodge Charger (s/n 6859)	$2,200.00
2017 Dodge Charger (s/n 9860)	$2,000.00
2019 Ford F150 (s/n 2442)	$3,700.00
2019 Ford F150 (s/n 1011)	$11,400.00
2006 Ford F150 (s/n 2234)	$400.00
2015 Dodge Ram (s/n 2434)	$1,600.00
2009 Ford F350 Utility (s/n 3866)	$450.00
Message Board Trailer (s/n 8477)	$500.00
Message Board Trailer (s/n 8485)	$500.00
Message Board Trailer (s/n 8478)	$500.00
Message Board Trailer (s/n 8479)	$500.00
Caterpillar D6	$23,000.00

Item	Sale Price
Camper Shell	$100.00
Camper Shell	$10.00
Crate of Filters & Misc.	$375.00
Concrete Saw	$50.00
2 Tires & Wheels	$25.00
3 Tires & Wheels	$25.00
3 Tires & Wheels	$25.00
Misc. Center Links	$70.00
Misc. Drive Shafts	$90.00
Pallet of Blades	$475.00
3 Fans	$25.00
Compressor	$50.00
Compressor	$55.00
Lincoln Welder	$50.00
Robin Aire A/C Machine	$55.00
Misc. Parts & Shelf Unit	$10.00
Transmission Jack	$25.00
Shop Cart	$10.00
Clarke Hot Shot Welder	$65.00
6 Hose Reels	$100.00
Strut Machine	$10.00
Baldor Grinder	$375.00
AMCO Brake Lathe	$5.00
Box Van Body	$375.00
Item requiring disassembly/removal by buyer	$1,900.00
Tractor Mounted Side Cutter	$800.00

Item	Sale Price
Utility Trailer	$80.00

Removed From Auction

- Ford F350 Utility (listed as removed)
- Message Board Trailer (s/n 8483)

Total Equipment Sales: $67,345.00

Grand Totals

Category	Total
Real Estate Sales	$135,950.00
Equipment Sales	$67,345.00
Combined Auction Sales	**$203,295.00**

Including real estate buyer premiums and deed-preparation fees:

Category	Total
Real Estate Transaction Value	$150,422.50
Equipment Sales	$67,345.00
Overall Value Including Fees	**$217,767.50**

Chairman Gibbs motioned to approve the sale of the Old High Falls Fire Station at the high bid of $74,000, acknowledging the auctioneer's commission and closing cost.
Commissioner Ambrose seconded the motion, and the motion passed 4-0.
Commissioner Rowland was momentarily out of the room for the vote.

Towaliga Judicial Circuit FY2026-2027 Budget

Finance Director Angie Sorrow presented the proposed FY2027 Towaliga Judicial Circuit (TJC) budgets for the District Attorney's Office, Public Defender's Office, and Accountability Courts. Budget allocations are shared among Butts, Lamar, and Monroe counties based on established cost-sharing percentages.

District Attorney Budget

- FY2027 total budget proposed at $1,562,895, an increase of $46,865 from FY2026.

- Major increases are associated with District Attorney/Victim Services funding.
- Monroe County's allocation increases from $589,584 to $607,810, an $18,226 increase (5% increase in county allocation).
- Monroe County share remains 38.89%.

Public Defender Budget

- FY2027 total budget proposed at $955,596, an increase of $45,505 from FY2026.
- Increases are primarily related to Public Defender and Juvenile Court operations.
- Monroe County's allocation increases from $353,935 to $371,631, a $17,696 increase (5% increase in county allocation).
- Monroe County share remains 38.89%.

Accountability Courts Budget

- FY2027 budget remains unchanged at $210,000.
- Includes funding for:
    - Drug Court
    - Veterans Court
    - Mental Health Court
- Monroe County's allocation remains $70,000 with no increase from FY2026.

Monroe County Financial Impact

- District Attorney Budget Increase: $18,226
- Public Defender Budget Increase: $17,696
- Accountability Courts: No increase
- Total Monroe County increase: $35,922

Recommended Action:

Approve the FY2027 Towaliga Judicial Circuit Budgets as presented.

Chairman Gibbs motioned to approve the FY 2026-2027 Towaliga Judicial Circuit budget as presented.

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

Public Comment

Russ Edge-Edge Road

- Procurement / Competitive Bidding Concerns
  - Asserted the Board has not followed Georgia procurement law for certain contracts exceeding statutory thresholds.
  - Cited recent examples:
  - Horse Arena rails/ "grails" project.
  - Comprehensive Land Use Plan contract.
- Claimed:
  - County relied on calling two-three companies and/or individual commissioner research instead of formal solicitation.
- Georgia Code requires:
  - Contracts over $100,000 to be competitively bid (sealed bids).
  - Contracts over $250,000 to be advertised (e.g., on the Georgia Procurement Registry).
  - Warned that failure to follow those requirements could lead to bid protests or legal challenges.
  - Urged the Board to consult the county attorney to confirm whether awards would withstand legal scrutiny if challenged.
- Budget Oversight & 2026–2027 Budget Process
  - Said he previously contacted commissioners about concerns with the 2026 budget, using analysis based on a spreadsheet provided by a former county manager.
- Reported he was told by at least one commissioner that:
  - The finance department is doing a good job and "passes audits", implying commissioners saw no problem.
- Criticized this response, arguing:
  - Commissioners control spending and should be able to explain where the money goes.
  - Audits alone do not mean the budget priorities are sound.

- Challenged commissioners to ask themselves:
  - “What would cause you to not approve a budget?”
  - If there is no scenario where they would vote no, they should say so publicly and clarify that effective control rests elsewhere.
- Public Comment Responses & Transparency
  - Thanked Commissioner Ambrose for previously raising the idea that commissioners should be able to respond to public comments.
- Requested an update on:
  - Whether and how the Board plans to allow responses or dialogue following public comments.
  - Whether the Chairman has conferred with the county attorney about enabling such responses under the Open Meetings Act.
- Agricultural Building Project
  - Asked for an update on the Agricultural Building project:
  - Whether a design contract has been executed.
  - Whether there is now a timeline for design and construction.
  - Emphasized desire for more visibility and timeliness on that project.

Mitchell Bunce-Strickland Loop

- Support for Impact Fees
  - Expressed strong support for the Board’s decision to move forward with an impact fee study.
  - Believes the County has “missed a golden opportunity” for several years by not having impact fees in place, particularly:
    - Given the rapid residential growth.
    - The strain on County services and schools.
  - Stated:
    - Impact fees can help address the impact of new development on both County services and the school system, which he described as “highly overtaxed.”
- Growth & Housing
  - Suggested that if developers know impact fees are coming, they might:

        - Pursue higher-density housing.
        - Produce more affordable housing options, because:
            - More units in “the right spaces” can lower per-unit land and infrastructure costs.
    - Viewed the Board’s action as:
        - A step in the right direction for managing growth and funding infrastructure.
- Appreciation to Board
    - Thanked the Board for:
        - Taking up the impact fee topic.
        - Voting to proceed with the impact fee study.

Carol Edge-Stokes Store Road

- Impact Fees & Study Scope:
    - Clarification on Impact Fee Options
        - Asked which study option the Board chose from Bill Ross & Associates:
            - Option including library and animal control, or
            - The option excluding those categories.
        - Wanted a clear answer on whether:
            - Impact fees would cover library and animal control, or only Parks & Rec, EMS/Fire, Sheriff, Roads.
    - Schools & Impact Fees
        - Pointed out that schools were not listed under the County’s impact fee categories, asking:
            - Why schools are excluded when they are clearly heavily impacted by population growth.
        - Understood that schools might be separate but questioned whether the County’s approach is adequate given school strain.
    - Who Sets Parameters & Fees
        - Asked:
            - Who decides exactly who pays impact fees (e.g., all new houses, commercial only, etc.)?

            - Who determines which services the impact fees can be used for?
            - Whether that is:
                - Solely the Board of Commissioners, or
                - Prescribed by the consultant as part of the study.
        - Indicated she did not fully understand what the consultant would do versus what the County could do on its own.
    - Use of Consultant vs. In-House Work
        - Questioned why the County must pay $59,650–66,000 for a consultant to design impact fees.
        - Asked why the County could not:
            - Figure out "how to do it" internally, using its own staff.
            - Save the consultant fee if staff can research and structure impact fees themselves.
- City Facility on County Roads:
    - Data Center / City-County Responsibility
        - Referred to a data center project (on Smith/Johnsonville Road), noting:
            - The facility is located on City property.
            - The roads around it are County roads.
        - Major concerns:
            - Heavy construction and service traffic for the city-zoned facility could damage County roads.
            - Unclear who bears the cost of repairing those County roads if they are degraded by city-approved development.
    - Tires / Dumping and Responsibility
        - Mentioned social media posts about tires dumped along a county road near / around the project.
        - Noted public confusion:
            - People were unsure whether the County or City was responsible for cleanup and enforcement.

- Suggested Need for Clear Conditions & Cost-Sharing
    - Argued that:
        - For projects where city property depends on County infrastructure, there should be:
            - Clear agreements about who pays to maintain/repair roads.
            - Potentially conditions placed on developments, so the County is not left funding road damage caused by city-approved projects.
    - Emphasized that impact fees or other tools might need to cover costs of road destruction and County services when they are driven by developments outside the County's direct control.

Nipper Bunn-Frank Bunn Drive

- Opposition to Impact Fees
    - Acknowledged he raised his hand against impact fees when polled by the Board.
    - Characterized impact fees as:
        - Essentially a "prepaid tax" on new development.
        - Questioned:

"Why not just tell them to go ahead and pay a couple of years of property taxes and put that in the pot?"

-
    - Skeptical that impact fees will:
        - Meaningfully slow growth.
        - Discourage residents from moving in or building homes.
- Growth Control via Existing Tools
    - Argued the County already has substantial tools to manage growth:
        - Zoning changes.
        - Subdivision plat approvals and conditions.
        - Ability to approve or deny new subdivisions and rezonings.
    - Suggested that if the County truly wants to "make it impossible" to build, impact fees are only one extreme lever, and the Board already has leverage through zoning decisions.

- Fairness Concerns
    - Emphasized:
        - Impact fees make it harder for people to buy property and build houses.
        - Feels like an additional up-front burden on individuals who might otherwise be long-term taxpayers.
- Closing Note
    - Thanked the Board for what they do but reiterated he sees impact fees as a tax front-loaded on new residents, rather than a fair tool.

Commissioner's Comments

Commissioner Lamarcus Davis – District 1

Commissioner Davis had no additional comments.

Commissioner Eddie Rowland – District 2

- Procurement & Contracts
    - Stated he is not aware of any contracts that have been executed improperly.
    - Expressed confidence that Lorri (County Manager), purchasing staff, and the engineer closely review and handle contracts in compliance with law.
    - Noted that with the number of open records requests being filed, any major problem likely would have already been uncovered.
- Ag Arena
    - Reported that the Ag Arena group met earlier that day.
    - Said a plan and price package is expected to be ready and placed on the June 16 agenda for Board consideration.
- Workload & Public Criticism
    - Mentioned the high volume of calls, meetings, and issues he handles as a commissioner.
    - Stated he intends to keep doing the work voters asked him to do even when his decisions are second-guessed in public.
    - Said his long-term goal is that by around 2029, he and other taxpayers will see significantly reduced property taxes, and that the same financial improvements will benefit all county citizens.

Commissioner John Ambrose – District 3

- Personal Gain / Ethics
    - Emphasized that no commissioner is personally profiting from County projects or contracts.
    - Rejected claims that the Board is "lining its pockets," stating that is not happening.
- Impact Fees & Tax Relief
    - Strongly supported impact fees as part of a broader strategy to:
        - Lower property taxes for existing homeowners.
        - Ultimately pursue goals such as:
            - Much higher homestead exemptions (e.g., $100,000).
            - In the longer term, potentially eliminating property taxes for seniors (65+), depending on revenue growth.
    - Argued that if the County reduces property taxes substantially without impact fees:
        - The County could become a magnet for in-migration, creating a surge in growth.
        - Impact fees help moderate that growth and ensure new residents contribute to infrastructure costs.
- Missed Revenue from Past Growth
    - Noted the County is "late to the game" on impact fees.
    - Pointed out that:
        - Large projects (e.g., Buc-ee's, other Rumble Road developments, data centers) and many homes have been built without impact fees.
        - This represents a significant missed revenue opportunity that could have helped finance tax relief and infrastructure.
- Concrete at Landfill
    - Clarified that:
        - The large volume of concrete at the landfill came from an old GDOT (state) project about 17–18 years ago, before the current Board.
        - The County is not currently accepting new concrete from the public.

    - Explained:
        - The County has already spent money moving and managing that concrete in the past.
        - A concrete-crushing contract is now in place at what he described as the best price the County has been offered.
        - Crushed material will be used for County purposes only (e.g., drive/yard base), which is more economical than buying new gravel.

Commissioner Al Turner – District 4

- Appreciation & Meeting Outcomes
    - Thanked citizens for attending, saying the meeting was informative.
    - Expressed appreciation to the Board for:
        - Moving forward with the impact fee study.
        - Approving the comprehensive land use plan contract.
- Importance of Planning
    - Emphasized the comprehensive plan is especially important:
        - Recalled that 4 to 5 years ago, people advocated for a bypass around Forsyth, but it was not done.
        - Observed that today, traffic and truck congestion through the city demonstrate how costly that missed opportunity has become.
    - Said the decisions made tonight help avoid repeating past mistakes, ensuring the County plans proactively for infrastructure and growth.

Chairman Alan Gibbs

- Concrete & Landfill Contract
    - Reiterated the story of concrete at the landfill:
        - County has been paid to accept concrete previously and is now responsible for managing it.
        - EPA/EPD are not supportive of leaving large piles of concrete in a landfill.
    - Explained:
        - The County obtained multiple quotes for a concrete crusher and selected the best price.

        - Crushed concrete will be used only for County purposes (e.g., roads/driveways where permissible), not for sale.
        - The approach will save money versus purchasing gravel outright.
- Impact Fees – Mixed Views
    - Described himself as being on "both sides" of the impact fee issue:
        - Acknowledged impact fees might help slow growth and support services if the County significantly reduces property taxes (making Monroe County very attractive).
        - Also expressed concern that impact fees:
            - Would apply to every new house, including homes built by long-time residents or their children.
            - Could feel like an extra up-front burden on citizens.
    - Clarified:
        - The vote taken was to study impact fees, not to implement them.
        - He wants more information and analysis before deciding whether to support an impact fee ordinance.
- Procurement & Option Choice Clarification
    - Acknowledged there was initial confusion during the meeting about:
        - Whether the Board had clearly specified which impact fee study option it approved.

    - Directed the Clerk to verify the record:
        - Clerk later confirmed that Option 2 (excluding library and animal services) was the option stated in the motion and captured in her notes.
    - Emphasized the importance of:
        - Getting the record right.
        - Ensuring decisions, especially on financial matters, are clearly documented in the minutes.

Executive Session-Personnel

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to enter executive session for personnel at 10:49 a.m. Commissioner Rowland seconded the motion and the motion carried 3-0.

Commissioner Turner recused himself from the executive session.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to come out of executive session at 11:07 a.m.

Chairman Gibbs seconded the motion and the motion carried 3-0

Action from Executive Session

County Attorney Ben Vaughn stated the Board discussed a matter involving personnel, and no public action is required.

Adjourn

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to adjourn at 11:08 a.m.

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

Respectively Submitted by:

____

Janet Abbott, County Clerk