Monroe County Board of Commissioners

Minutes of September 08, 2026

Called Meeting

1:00 P.M.

Present:

Alan Gibbs, Chairman

John Ambrose, Vice-Chairman

Lamarcus Davis, District 1

Eddie Rowland, District 2

Al Turner, District 4

Staff:

Lorri Byrd, County Manager

Brandon Bowen, County Attorney

Janet Abbott, County Clerk

Richard Dumas, Public Information Officer

Welcome

Chairman Gibbs welcomed everyone in attendance.

Prayer

Chairman Gibbs led the invocation.

Pledge

Commissioner Turner led the pledge.

Roll Call

County Clerk Janet Abbott called roll.

Call to Order

Chairman Gibbs called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

New Business

Approve Agenda

Chairman Gibbs presented the agenda for approval.

Commissioner Rowland motioned to approve the agenda.

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

Minutes-Meeting 09/01/2026

Commissioner Turner motioned to approve the minutes of September 01, 2026, regular meeting with the usual 30 days for changes.

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

IGA with the Development Authority of Monroe County

The Board considered an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) between Monroe County, the Monroe County School District, and the Development Authority of Monroe County regarding the distribution of Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILOTs) associated with "Project Rumble," Google LLCs proposed hyperscale data center campus in Monroe County. The project is contemplated to be financed through a Development Authority bond transaction with an estimated maximum principal amount of $40 billion.

Under the agreement, Google will make PILOT payments in lieu of traditional ad valorem property taxes while qualifying project property is titled in the Development Authority. The Development Authority will bill and collect the payments, maintain them in a separate Project Rumble PILOT Fund, and distribute the funds to Monroe County and the Monroe County School District while retaining an agreed portion for economic development purposes.

During the construction-in-progress period, PILOT payments are scheduled at $450,352 in 2027 and $22.75 million in 2028, with an additional $23.25 million payment in 2029 if the project's first operating year is extended to 2030. For the first three operating years, the County and School District receive equal distributions; beginning in Year 4, the distribution changes, with the School District receiving a larger share. Annual PILOT payments increase over the 20-year schedule, reaching $77.15 million annually in Years 16–20.

The agreement also establishes permitted uses of each party's PILOT revenues. The County may use its normal proportionate share for authorized governmental purposes, while amounts received above its normal millage-based share are designated for capital projects benefiting the community and School District. The School District may use its distribution for purposes

authorized by law, and the Development Authority must use its retained share for economic development activities.

The IGA is effective September 8, 2026, and remains in effect until the final PILOT payment has been collected and distributed or December 31, 2049, whichever is later. If the project becomes subject to normal ad valorem taxation, applicable PILOT obligations cease and taxes are collected and distributed under the normal property-tax process.

The Project Rumble PILOT Payments and Distributions are as follows:

Construction in progress years

During CIP Years 2027 and 2028, and 2029, only if the Company exercises the Year 1 Extension and moves Year 1 to 2030, the Company will pay the following CIP PILOT Payments to the Development Authority of Monroe County:

Year	PILOT payment	County	School District	Authority retained
2027	$450,352	$211,665	$211,665	$27,021
2028	$22,750,000	$10,692,000	$10,692,000	$1,365,000
2029*	$23,250,000	$10,927,500	$10,927,500	$1,395,000

* No CIP Year 3 payment is due unless Year 1 is extended to 2030.

Following the last CIP year

For each subsequent Year, the Company will pay the Authority, and the Authority will distribute or retain, the following amounts:

Year	PILOT payment	County	School District	Authority retained
1	$31,000,000	$14,570,000	$14,570,000	$1,860,000
2	$33,500,000	$15,745,000	$15,745,000	$2,010,000
3	$33,500,000	$15,745,000	$15,745,000	$2,010,000
4	$35,000,000	$14,805,000	$18,095,000	$2,100,000
5	$36,000,000	$15,228,000	$18,612,000	$2,160,000
6	$53,750,000	$20,210,000	$30,315,000	$3,225,000
7	$53,750,000	$20,210,000	$30,315,000	$3,225,000
8	$53,750,000	$20,210,000	$30,315,000	$3,225,000

9	$53,750,000	$20,210,000	$30,315,000	$3,225,000
10	$53,750,000	$20,210,000	$30,315,000	$3,225,000
11	$64,000,000	$24,064,000	$36,096,000	$3,840,000
12	$64,000,000	$24,064,000	$36,096,000	$3,840,000
13	$64,000,000	$24,064,000	$36,096,000	$3,840,000
14	$64,000,000	$24,064,000	$36,096,000	$3,840,000
15	$64,000,000	$24,064,000	$36,096,000	$3,840,000
16	$77,150,000	$29,008,400	$43,512,600	$4,629,000
17	$77,150,000	$29,008,400	$43,512,600	$4,629,000
18	$77,150,000	$29,008,400	$43,512,600	$4,629,000
19	$77,150,000	$29,008,400	$43,512,600	$4,629,000
20	$77,150,000	$29,008,400	$43,512,600	$4,629,000

If the PILOT amount collected in a CIP Year or subsequent year differs from the amount shown, the County and School District distributions and the Authority retention are adjusted in the same relative proportions as that year's row.

If the Project remains titled in the Authority on January 1 of a calendar year after Year 20, the Company will pay a Beyond Term PILOT Payment until the purchase option is exercised and the Project is conveyed to the Company. The Authority reasonably determines the payment under Georgia ad valorem valuation rules, based on the Project's fair market value, in an amount equal to normal ad valorem taxes had the Company held title on January 1. The payment is distributed to the County and School District and retained by the Authority in the same relative proportions as the Year 20 payment.

The Authority bills and collects the payments and disburses collected funds no later than the end of each calendar year. The annual CIP and Years 1–20 invoices are due October 15, with invoices furnished at least 45 days before that date. *Source: Agreement §§ 3(a), 4(b), Exhibit A.*

Chairman Gibbs stated the full IGA, and resolution documents were distributed to commissioners on September 3rd. Chairman Gibbs continued stating the material is extensive and available on the county website for full public review.

Commissioner Rowland motioned to approve the resolution and IGA with the Development Authority with authorization for the chairman and clerk to sign.

Commissioner Davis seconded the motion for discussion.

Commissioner Ambrose expressed opposition stating that he strongly opposed the provision allocating 6% of the PILOT revenues to the Development Authority, stating that this amount projected at approximately $70 million over 20 years would fund additional industrial parks and accelerate growth in Monroe County rather than slow it. He expressed concern that such growth would strain the school system, lead to overdevelopment, and risk making Monroe County resemble Henry County in a few years, contrary to his goal of preserving the County's rural character. Commissioner Ambrose stated he favors supporting local "mom-and-pop" businesses and using incoming revenues to benefit existing residents, such as by significantly increasing homestead exemptions and potentially eliminating property taxes for those with homestead exemptions, instead of directing a large share to the Development Authority. He also criticized the process by which the 6% figure was negotiated, asserting that two commissioners met with the Development Authority and School Board without including the full Board and that he did not learn of the 6% allocation until the documents were sent on September 3, which he viewed as rushing the decision and excluding him from earlier discussions.

Commissioner Lamarcus Davis responded stating that the County and the Development Authority have already been in discussions regarding the 3–4 acres in the existing industrial park referenced by Commissioner Ambrose, explaining that the Development Authority is legally unable to give land away but can sell it at a reduced price, and that this matter had been previously discussed and remains under review. He further explained that the 6% share of PILOT revenues allocated to the Development Authority will be used in part to hire a professional firm to manage and oversee the funds, so the entire amount is not discretionary income, and that the approximately $70 million figure is projected over a 20-year period. Commissioner Davis noted that while the agreement allows the Development Authority to use funds for industrial parks and to assist the County, the Board does not control the Authority's specific project decisions, and he emphasized that growth is inevitable and the County should not aim to be stagnant but instead manage growth responsibly.

The motion carried 3-2 with Chairman Gibbs, Commissioner Davis, and Commissioner Rowland in favor, and Commissioner Ambrose and Commissioner Turner opposed. Commissioner Turner stated he would like to have more information.

Film Permit Application Resolution

The Board considered a resolution approving film permit fees for movie and television productions in Monroe County. The resolution recognizes the potential economic benefits of film and television production while establishing a process intended to protect public resources and promote public safety. Based on an evaluation by the County's Public Information Officer, the proposed fee schedule is intended to recover administrative costs associated with processing and administering film permits.

The resolution adopts the recommended film permit fee schedule and Film Permit Application and authorizes the Public Information Officer to administer the County's film permitting process, including making non-substantive administrative revisions to the application as necessary. The Chairman is authorized to execute the resolution, and the County Clerk is authorized to attest signatures and take necessary actions to implement it.

Public Information Officer Richard Dumas presented the following:

- On July 14, the Board had previously given consensus approval to film application fees for commercial film and TV production (movies, commercials, etc.) in Monroe County.
- County attorneys have since drafted a formal resolution and updated permit application to implement these fees.

Mr. Dumas stated the following corrections need to be made:

1. Fee Correction:
    - On the film permit application, the line stating "an additional $100 per day for using county-owned facilities… that require closure or disruption" should be corrected to $250 per day.
    - The $100 per day fee applies only when there is no disruption to business.
    - The additional $150 (for a total of $250) reflects the fee structure previously approved on July 14.
2. Scope Clarification:
    - Clarify that the application and fees are for commercial purposes only, such as:
        - Major films
        - Commercial Productions
        - Larger industry projects (Hollywood or similar professional productions)

- Not intended for:
    - Individuals walking around and casually filming in county buildings
    - College students doing small projects that cannot support such fees

Chairman Gibbs motioned to approve the film permit application and resolution with the recommended changes.

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

Public Comment

Rob Law-Lassiter Road

Rob Law, resident of Lassiter Road, addressed the board with the following concerns:

- Transparency Concerns:
    - Stated that transparency "doesn't matter anymore" and criticized the Board for approving a document that, in his view, does not adequately explain how public money will be spent or whether the deal is good value.
- Process & Timing:
    - Questioned why the agreement is being rushed.
- Financial Clarity:
    - Requested a complete financial comparison between:
        - The PILOT structure, and
        - Ordinary property taxation
    - Asked: How much property tax revenue is being given up by using the PILOT structure and leasing/ownership arrangement with Google?
    - Emphasized the need for documented analysis the public can see.
- Disconnect with Public:
    - Stated that at least three commissioners appear to have lost contact with public concerns, especially regarding data centers.
    - Recalled earlier Board commitments to no NDAs and full transparency and argued that the current process "blows that out of the water."

- MOU Concerns:
    - Observed that commissioners (except possibly one) have not seen the MOU between Google and the Development Authority, where he believes the "real" terms of the relationship are contained.
    - Argued that the MOU should be attached to the IGA so that the relationship and all obligations are fully visible.
- Unclear Goals:
    - Pointed to Page 4 of the agreement, noting that investment and job goals are referenced but not documented in a clear way for the public to understand expectations.
    - Concerned that the Board is "just ticking a box" for money that could be a good or bad deal for the county without adequate analysis.
- Conclusion:
    - Expressed disappointment and urged the Board to "do better for the public."

No other speakers came forward for public comment.

Commissioner's Comments

District 1 – Commissioner Lamarcus Davis:

Commissioner Davis addressed public concerns about the Google project by clarifying that Google has purchased its property and facilities outright and is not leasing anything from Monroe County or the Development Authority. He emphasized that the County has nothing to lease to Google and stated that the agreement documents are public and fully available, with everything contained in them. He reiterated that nothing has been done underhandedly or behind closed doors and that the County has been as transparent as possible, noting that similar arrangements are used in many other jurisdictions.

District 2 – Commissioner Eddie Rowland:

Commissioner Rowland reported that the public survey related to the Comprehensive Land Use Plan, being conducted by GMC, is now live and can be shared via email. He noted that staff, including Richard, are working with the regional commission to add the survey to the County website and that the intent is to have the website page ready before posting the survey link on Facebook. He added that flyers will be posted to help spread the word and encouraged citizens to participate and provide comments and opinions on the comprehensive land use plan.

District 3 – Commissioner John Ambrose:

Commissioner Ambrose expressed strong dissatisfaction with the process and substance of the Google agreement, stating that two commissioners met with the Development Authority and School Board and negotiated the 6% share for the Development Authority without involving the full Board in those discussions. He said he did not learn of the 6% allocation until the material was sent on September 3, by which time he believed the three commissioners in favor had already agreed to it. He reiterated that he would never support giving 6% of the PILOT revenues to the Development Authority, warning that in about five years, if Monroe County looks like Henry County due to rapid growth, citizens should attribute that outcome to the three commissioners who voted for the deal. He criticized the majority for not supporting impact fees or efforts to slow growth and suggested instead that new revenues should be used to raise homestead exemption values—potentially by $100,000 over the next year or two—and possibly eliminate property taxes for residents with homestead exemptions. He characterized the decision as a bad one that was rushed and should have been discussed and negotiated by all five commissioners, not just two.

District 4 – Commissioner Al Turner:

Commissioner Turner stated that he does not believe the Google agreement was rushed, explaining that Google owns the property, is running a business, and must move according to its own timeline, which the County must recognize. He expressed support for impact fees as an ideal tool and said he would like to slow the pace of population growth, warning that without such measures the County could begin to resemble neighboring high-growth counties because many people want to move to Monroe County in its current favorable condition. He concluded his remarks by thanking those in attendance.

Chairman – Chairman Alan Gibbs:

Chairman Gibbs responded to public and commissioner concerns by rejecting the idea that the Google project had been rushed, noting that the project has been underway for over two years. He emphasized that the entire deal is public, with the same documents that are in the commissioners' books also posted on the County website and stated that there are no secrets and that he does not see how the Board could be more transparent. He said the agreement is by far the best financial deal Monroe County has ever seen and will place the County in a strong

long-term financial position, allowing it to continue reducing taxes while increasing services. He also explained that he has personally called the Development Authority, the attorney, and others involved to stay informed about the project, and noted that all five commissioners had the same opportunity to make those calls. He described the Board as a team of five and stated that while he cannot force any commissioner to seek out information, the opportunity to do so has always been available.

Executive Session

There was no executive session.

Action from Executive Session

There was no executive session therefore no action.

Adjourn

Commissioner Davis motioned to adjourn at 1:20 p.m.

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

Respectively Submitted by:

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Janet Abbott, County Clerk