MONROE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
AUGUST 5, 2025

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Monroe County Board of Commissioners held a Regular Meeting in the City of Monroe, on Tuesday, August 19, 2025. Chairman David Vensel called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Roll call by Deputy Clerk, Grace Miles, as follows:

PRESENT			ABSENT
Jay Heinzerling	Brian Lamour	J. Henry Lievens	David Swartout
David Hoffman	David Vensel		
Greg Moore, Jr.	Dawn Asper		

A quorum being present, the Board proceeded to conduct business.

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Hoffman led the Pledge of Allegiance.

IV. OPENING PRAYER

Deputy Clerk, Grace Miles led the Opening Prayer.

V. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Commissioner Lamour, supported by Commissioner Heinzerling to approve the August 19, 2025 Regular Meeting Agenda as presented.

Discussion was held.

Roll call by Clerk as follows:

AYE			NAY	EXCUSED	ABSTAIN
David Hoffman	Greg Moore, Jr.	J. Henry Lievens		David Swartout	
Dawn Asper	Brian Lamour				
David Vensel	Jay Heinzerling				

Motion carried.

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (08/05/2025 Regular Meeting Minutes)

Motion by Commissioner Lamour, supported by Commissioner Hoffman to approve the minutes as presented for the August 5, 2025 Regular Meeting and waive the reading thereof.

Vice-Chairman Lievens amended the motion to waive the reading thereof. Commissioner Lamour and Commissioner Hoffman both agreed to this.

Roll call by Clerk as follows:

AYE			NAY	EXCUSED	ABSTAIN
David Hoffman	Greg Moore, Jr.	J. Henry Lievens		David Swartout	
Dawn Asper	Brian Lamour				
David Vensel	Jay Heinzerling				

Motion carried.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT—

1. Ned Birkey: Shared agricultural concerns in the County. Explained China owns farmland in Milan and London. Shared his concerns with farm security as well as national security. Mr. Birkey explained farm bankruptcies are projected to be higher this year and farmland values are projected to go up in Michigan. Mr. Birkey also shared his concerns regarding immigration and stated agriculture needs more workers. Mr. Birkey stated the third week in September is National Farm Safety and Health Week and the emphasis is safety first, avoid the worst.

2. Dave Emerick: Stated he saw a request from Preadmore for a FEMA Grant on the agenda Mr. Emerick explained he has been trying to get the final draws from FEMA for three homeowners and stated he is one of the homeowners. Mr. Emerick explained he would like to talk to Mr. Preadmore to discuss stories regarding FEMA.

3. Darcy Piedmonte: Ms. Piedmonte shared her concerns in regards to the support of the Monroe County Community College millage renewal coming up in November. She stated there was a meeting on August 7th to discuss this and none of the Commissioners were in attendance, besides the Chairman. Ms. Piedmonte shared her concerns with the word transparency being used at the last meeting. Explained the confidential legal opinion needs to be heard in closed session so the results can be brought to the people.

VIII. RESOLUTIONS, SPECIAL TRIBUTES & PRESENTATION —

1. Presentation of the 2024 Monroe County Commission on Aging Annual Report by Mr. Jason Berry, Community Planning & Engagement Director.
   Link to Annual Report: HERE

   Jason Berry explained Commission on Aging is currently overseen by Ramona Hall and himself. They oversee thirty-four (34) different programs with nineteen (19) different service providers. Mr. Berry explained some statistics as well as some well received projects within the County.

   Discussion was held.

   Motion by Commissioner Lamour, supported by Commissioner Asper to accept the 2024 Monroe County Commission on Aging Annual Report and place it on file.

   Roll call by Clerk as follows:

AYE			NAY	EXCUSED	ABSTAIN
David Hoffman	Greg Moore, Jr.	J. Henry Lievens		David Swartout	
Dawn Asper	Brian Lamour				
David Vensel	Jay Heinzerling				

Motion carried.

IX. FINANCE MATTERS

1. Payment of the 08/20/2025 Accounts Payable Current Claims Report in the amount of $1,855,276.35

   Motion by Commissioner Hoffman, supported by Commissioner Lamour to confirm the 08/20/2025 Accounts Payable Current Claims Report for $1,855,276.35 and approve the Claims for the date and amount presented.

   Discussion was held.

   Roll call by Clerk as follows:

AYE			NAY	EXCUSED	ABSTAIN
David Hoffman	Greg Moore, Jr.		J. Henry Lievens	David Swartout	
Dawn Asper	Brian Lamour				
David Vensel	Jay Heinzerling				

Motion carried.

X. CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of Non-Claims

   a. Check Register dated 08/08/2025 in the amount of $ 273,601.31
   b. Check Register dated 08/15/2025 in the amount of $ 674,533.96

   Motion by Vice-Chairman Lievens, supported by Commissioner Heinzerling to confirm the non-claims payments as presented on the agenda for the dates and amounts listed.

   Roll call by Clerk as follows:

AYE			NAY	EXCUSED	ABSTAIN
David Hoffman	Greg Moore, Jr.	J. Henry Lievens		David Swartout	
Dawn Asper	Brian Lamour				
David Vensel	Jay Heinzerling				

Motion carried.

XI. COMMUNICATIONS

1. Operations Committee – Report of Committee Chairman from 8/14/2025 Meeting. Link to Operations Committee 8/14/2025 Agenda Packet: HERE

   a. Letter dated August 5, 2025 from Jason Berry, Community & Engagement Director requesting the addition of a new Commission on Aging Assistant position at an estimated cost of $85,682 effective January 1, 2026.

   Motion by Vice-Chairman Lievens, supported by Commissioner Hoffman to accept the communication, place it on file, and approve the addition of a new Commission on Aging Assistant Position at an estimated cost of $85,682 effective January 1, 2026.

Roll call by Clerk as follows:

AYE			NAY	EXCUSED	ABSTAIN
David Hoffman	Greg Moore, Jr.	J. Henry Lievens		David Swartout	
Dawn Asper	Brian Lamour				
David Vensel	Jay Heinzerling				

Motion carried.

2. Letter dated August 11, 2025 from Chief Deputy Michael Preadmore requesting permission to apply and accept the allocation award from the Secondary Road Patrol and Traffic Accident Prevention Program for FY2026 in the amount of $257,491. The budget will require a match of $546,884.

Discussion held regarding the budget.

Motion by Commissioner Lamour, supported by Commissioner Heinzerling to approve the application and acceptance of the allocation award from the Secondary Road Patrol and Traffic Accident Prevention Program for FY2026 in the amount of $257,491. The budget will require a match of $546,884.

Roll call by Clerk as follows:

AYE			NAY	EXCUSED	ABSTAIN
David Hoffman	Greg Moore, Jr.	J. Henry Lievens		David Swartout	
Dawn Asper	Brian Lamour				
David Vensel	Jay Heinzerling				

Motion carried.

3. Letter dated August 14, 2025 from Chief Deputy Michael Preadmore requesting confirmation of a Port Security Grant Application to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for a total award amount of $266,127.75. A County match of $88,710.00 would be required.

Discussion held regarding the budget.

Motion by Commissioner Lamour, supported by Commissioner Hoffman to confirm the Port Security Grant Application to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for a total award amount of $266,127.75. A County match of $88,710.00 would be required.

Roll call by Clerk as follows:

AYE			NAY	EXCUSED	ABSTAIN
David Hoffman	Greg Moore, Jr.	J. Henry Lievens		David Swartout	
Dawn Asper	Brian Lamour				
David Vensel	Jay Heinzerling				

Motion carried.

4. Letter dated August 14, 2025 from Mr. Chris Westover requesting approval to accept the EGLE Materials Management Planning Grant Funds in the amount of $137,404.50 with no local match required.

   Chris Westover explained they have had to cancel multiple Materials Management Planning Committee Meetings since they did not have the work plan approved. This plan is now approved and if they get the Board's approval to accept the money, they can start moving forward.

   Discussion was held.

   Motion by Commissioner Heinzerling, supported by Commissioner Hoffman to approve accepting the EGLE Materials Management Planning Grant Funds in the amount of $137,404.50 with no local match required.

   Roll call by Clerk as follows:

AYE			NAY	EXCUSED	ABSTAIN
David Hoffman	Greg Moore, Jr.	J. Henry Lievens		David Swartout	
Dawn Asper	Brian Lamour				
David Vensel	Jay Heinzerling				

   Motion carried.

5. Letter dated August 13, 2025 from Mr. Jason Berry, Community Planning & Engagement Director submitting the proposed updates to the Erie Township Master Plan for review and approval of the County Planner's recommendations.

   Motion by Commissioner Asper, supported by Commissioner Lamour to accept the communication, place it on file and approve the recommendations of the County Planner and transmit the recommendations to the Erie Township Council.

   Roll call by Clerk as follows:

AYE			NAY	EXCUSED	ABSTAIN
David Hoffman	Greg Moore, Jr.	J. Henry Lievens		David Swartout	
Dawn Asper	Brian Lamour				
David Vensel	Jay Heinzerling				

   Motion carried.

6. Agreement for Sale and Purchase of Real Estate by and between the City of Monroe Michigan and County of Monroe Michigan.

   Motion by Commissioner Heinzerling, supported by Commissioner Lamour to accept the communication, place it on file and approve the Agreement for Sale and Purchase of Real Estate by and between the City of Monroe and County of Monroe.

   Discussion was held regarding the type of development this would be.

   Roll call by Clerk as follows:

AYE			NAY	EXCUSED	ABSTAIN
David Hoffman	Greg Moore, Jr.	J. Henry Lievens		David Swartout	
Dawn Asper	Brian Lamour				
David Vensel	Jay Heinzerling				

Motion carried.

7. Parking Rental Agreement between the City of Monroe, Michigan (Landlord) and County of Monroe, Michigan (Tenant).

   Discussion was held regarding the timeframe of a renewal as well as the verbiage used in the agreement.

   Motion by Commissioner Lamour, supported by Commissioner Heinzerling to accept the communication, place it on file and approve the Parking Rental Agreement between the City of Monroe (Landlord) and County of Monroe (Tenant).

   Roll call by Clerk as follows:

AYE			NAY	EXCUSED	ABSTAIN
David Hoffman	Jay Heinzerling		Greg Moore, Jr.	David Swartout	
J. Henry Lievens	Brian Lamour		Dawn Asper		
David Vensel					

Motion carried.

XII. CLOSED SESSIONS

1. Closed Session to discuss Confidential Legal Opinion pursuant to MCL 15.268(h).

   Chairman Vensel explained it was recommended to him to vote for both closed sessions separately at the beginning so members of the public would not have to come back in, to go back into open, and then back into closed.

   Thomas Graham, Legal Counsel, explained this is to make it more convenient for the public. Mr. Graham explained this would be two (2) separate motions.

   Motion by Commissioner Lamour supported by Commissioner Hoffman to go into closed session to discuss confidential legal opinion pursuant to MCL 15.268(h).

   Commissioners Asper asked if Ms. Gabis could share a statement.

   Sarah Gabis explained the memorandum the Board received from her is a confidential legal opinion so she cannot discuss the contents in open session.

   Commissioner Asper asked if Ms. Gabis's results could be reported in a statement that wouldn't require a closed session.

   Ms. Gabis responded no, not until the contents of the memorandum have been contemplated.

Chairman Vensel asked Ms. Gabis if there is a statement she would like to give that would be allowable prior to starting the closed session.

Ms. Gabis first thanked the Board for entrusting her and her firm with this incredibly difficult task. Ms. Gabis stated work has been done and about thirty (30) witnesses have been interviewed. Ms. Gabis further explained her request is threefold: she would like to discuss the contents of her confidential legal opinion, she would like to provide an opportunity for Commissioners to ask questions about said legal opinion, and she would like the board to entertain a motion that would guide her next steps in the investigation. Ms. Gabis explained she feels as if she cannot move forward fat this point without the Boards guidance.

Roll Call by Clerk as follows:

AYE			NAY	EXCUSED	ABSTAIN
David Hoffman	Jay Heinzerling	Greg Moore, Jr.		David Swartout	
J. Henry Lievens	Brian Lamour				
David Vensel	Dawn Asper				

Motion carried. Closed session began at 7:02 p.m.

2. Closed Session to discuss Class Action Case Settlement in Property Tax Foreclosure Litigation– Arkona, LLC v. Monroe County, et al

Jesse Stanford, Treasurer, explained he is waiting for his attorney and discussed the transition between the first closed session and the second closed session.

Motion by Vice-Chairman Lievens, supported by Commissioner Lamour to go into closed session to discuss Class Action Case Settlement in Property Tax Foreclosure Litigation– Arkona, LLC v. Monroe County, et al.

Roll Call by Clerk as follows:

AYE			NAY	EXCUSED	ABSTAIN
David Hoffman	Jay Heinzerling	Greg Moore, Jr.		David Swartout	
J. Henry Lievens	Brian Lamour				
David Vensel	Dawn Asper				

Motion carried. Closed Session began at 7:55 p.m.

Motion by Vice-Chairman Lievens, supported by Commissioner Hoffman to go back on the record.

Roll Call by Clerk as follows:

AYE			NAY	EXCUSED	ABSTAIN
David Hoffman	Jay Heinzerling	Greg Moore, Jr.		David Swartout	
J. Henry Lievens	Brian Lamour				
David Vensel	Dawn Asper				

Motion carried.

Motion by Vice-Chairman Lievens, supported by Commissioner Lamour to continue the investigation with full support of the County staff and employees with an additional retainer not to exceed $20,000.

Roll Call by Clerk as follows:

AYE			NAY	EXCUSED	ABSTAIN
David Hoffman	Jay Heinzerling		Greg Moore, Jr.	David Swartout	
J. Henry Lievens	Brian Lamour		Dawn Asper		
David Vensel					

Motion carried.

Motion by Vice-Chairman Lievens, supported by Commissioner Hoffman to conditionally approve the settlement agreement in the Arkona litigation if, and only if, outside council continues to believe, after a consultation with the County Treasurer, that adoption of the Settlement remains in the best interest of the County after entry by the Court of an order preliminarily approving the Settlement.

Roll Call by Clerk as follows:

AYE			NAY	EXCUSED	ABSTAIN
David Hoffman	Jay Heinzerling	Greg Moore, Jr.		David Swartout	
J. Henry Lievens	Brian Lamour				
David Vensel	Dawn Asper				

Motion carried.

Motion by Vice-Chairman Lievens, supported by Commissioner Lamour to approve the intercounty cost share agreement for the Class Action Case Settlement.

Roll Call by Clerk as follows:

AYE			NAY	EXCUSED	ABSTAIN
David Hoffman	Jay Heinzerling	Greg Moore, Jr.		David Swartout	
J. Henry Lievens	Brian Lamour				
David Vensel	Dawn Asper				

Motion carried.

XIII. PUBLIC HEARINGS — None

XIV. OLD BUSINESS—

XV. NEW BUSINESS—

XVI. PUBLIC COMMENT—

XVII. ANNOUNCEMENTS—

1. Copies of any Special Tributes or Certificates issued since the August 5, 2025 meeting:

None.

XVIII. MEMBERS TIME –

Commissioner Moore – Passed.

Commissioner Swartout – Excused.

Commissioner Lamour – Stated it is great to see that the trail is progressing very well. It is looking good and a lot of people are using it and it's not even completed yet.

Commissioner Heinzerling – Passed.

Commissioner Asper – Explained she is so appreciative of the report on how the seniors in this County are taken care of. Stated what they do is very helpful for families.

Commissioner Hoffman – Explained he is working with the representatives in Lansing on a house joint resolution. Stated he has copies if anyone in the public would like one and he will get more into it at the next meeting.

Vice-Chairman Lievens – Echo Commissioner Asper comments and states he looks forward to the seniors in the west part of the County receiving a little more outreach and benefitting from the services, since it has been a historically underserved community.

Chairman Vensel – Passed.

XIX. ADJOURNMENT - Chairman Vensel adjourned the meeting at 8:35 p.m. with no further business to discuss.

Respectfully submitted by:

Grace Miles

Grace Miles
Deputy Clerk/Administrative Assistant
Monroe County Board of Commissioners