MONROE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 16, 2025

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Monroe County Board of Commissioners held a Regular Meeting in the City of Monroe, on Tuesday, September 16, 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
David Hoffman	David Vensel	David Swartout	
J Henry Lievens	Brian Lamour	Jay Heinzerling	
Dawn Asper	Greg Moore, Jr.		

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

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Heinzerling led the Pledge of Allegiance.

IV. OPENING PRAYER

Deputy Clerk, Grace Miles led the Opening Prayer.

V. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Vice-Chairman Lievens, supported by Commissioner Hoffman to approve the September 16, 2025 Regular Meeting Agenda with the following changes: item seventeen (17) moved to the next meeting, and item nineteen (19) moved to after item eight (8).

Roll call by Clerk as follows:

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

Motion carried.

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (09/02/2025 Regular Meeting Minutes)

Motion by Commissioner Heinzerling, supported by Commissioner Lamour to approve the minutes as presented for the September 2, 2025 Regular Meeting and waive the reading thereof.

Voice vote taken. Motion carried.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT—

1. Ned Birkey: Sated this week is the 82nd National Farm Safety and Health Week. Mr. Birkey elaborated on a handout he provided Commissioners as well as the items he brought. Stated he teaches the 4H Tractor Safety Class. Mr. Birkey also explained all the safety features on his tractor, as well as what he does while driving said tractor to keep himself and others safe.

2. Darcy Piedmonte: Stated the number of government employees that signed to put Brant on the November ballot is astonishing. Asked the Board to act how they would want the other political party to act, when they go into closed session. Explained this is not a diverse government body and reminded the Board there are some nonpartisan issues that should be dealt with as such. Ms. Piedmonte thanked Commissioner Hoffman for working hard to get some legislative solutions. Stated she loves the bike trail and thanked the Board.

3. Michael Grodi: Explained he is the Chairman of the Employee's Retirement System. Mr. Grodi stated he is in support of bringing back the pension plan for all County employees. The decision was made to get rid of this, but it has turned out to be a poor decision. Stated this is something important and he believes it needs to be reinstated. Mr. Grodi explained this pension system is a mature system of fifty (50) years and on average every year they put about $18 million into the local economy.

4. Dale Binecki: Shared his concerns as a District 2 candidate. Explained that in February of 2025, this Board voted to release this Commissioner of his office and scheduled a primary election. Mr. Binecki further explained three (3) candidates ran since they were told, and confirmed by the Board, that there was a vacancy to fill. These candidates campaigned in good faith, met with voters and prepared to represent this community. If the judge's ruling stands, the voters who supported them will be silenced. Mr. Binecki urged Board members to vote yes to the appeal.

5. Brian Harwood: Explained Mark Brant was his commissioner and when they needed city water or the roads fixed, Mark was there. Mr. Harwood stated Mark is a very fine person of the people and he believes he was voted in because he does a good job. Stated he is here to support him. Mr. Harwood also stated he finds it hypocritical that Monroe has many marijuana shops but no one is speaking out against those. Mr. Harwood stated he is not a marijuana user but we've allowed it to come into the community so trying to condemn a person for something he may not have even had awareness of is wrong.

6. Kristy Svatek-Whitson: Asked how is it possible that a man convicted of a felony, sentenced to prison, and barred from fulfilling the duties of office still holds a seat as our commissioner. This Board voted to move forward with a special election, acknowledging that when an elected official in convicted, the people deserve the right to choose new leadership. Stated if Mark Brant maintains his seat, the candidates who ran for this election will be sidelined. Their time and resources would be rendered mute. Ms. Svatek-Whitson asked the Board to follow through with original conviction and place appeal on this judgement. The primary election has taken place with people ready to fill this position.

VIII. CLOSED SESSION TO DISCUSS COLLECTIVE BARGAINING MATTERS

Motion by Commissioner Lamour, supported by Commissioner Heinzerling to go into closed session to discuss collective bargaining matters.

Roll call by Clerk as follows:

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

Motion carried.

Closed session is over. Chairman Vensel stated they are back on record.

Motion by Vice-Chairman Lievens, supported by Commissioner Hoffman to open up the defined benefit plan as it applies to all law enforcement, sheriff deputies, corrections officers, 9-1-1, youth center, prosecutors' office at a 2% multiplier and a 5% match in the dc.

Discussion was held.

Roll call by Clerk as follows:

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

Motion carried.

Motion by Commissioner Lamour, supported by Commissioner Hoffman to go into closed session to consult with Monroe County legal counsel regarding trial or settlement strategy in connection with

Roll call by Clerk as follows:

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

Motion carried.

Closed session is over. Chairman Vensel stated they are back on record.

Motion by Commissioner Hoffman, supported by Commissioner Lamour to appeal this the Monroe County and Monroe County Board of Commissioners vs. Mark S. Brant, Monroe County Circuit Court Case No. 2025-149222-CZ, and Mark Brant vs. Monroe County Board of Commissioners, Monroe County Circuit Court Case No. 2025-149230-CZ.

Chairman David Vensel offered background information that he believes is pertinent and important to the decision that's about to be made.

Roll call by Clerk as follows:

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

Motion carried.

IX. RESOLUTIONS, SPECIAL TRIBUTES & PRESENTATION —

1. Community Mental Health Authority Resolution formally opposing the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services' (MDHHS) plan to implement a competitive procurement process for Prepaid Inpatient Health Plans (PIHP's).

   Lisa Graham, Chief Executive Officer of Community Mental Health Authority, explained the reasoning behind why this Board would want to oppose this plan as well as why other communities have already done so.

   Motion by Commissioner Lamour, supporter by Commissioner Hoffman to approve adopting the Community Mental Health Authority Resolution formally opposing the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services' (MDHHS) plan to implement a competitive procurement process for Prepaid Inpatient Health Plans (PIHPs).

   Roll call by Clerk as follows:

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

Motion carried.

X. FINANCE MATTERS

1. Payment of the 09/17/2025 Accounts Payable Current Claims Report in the amount of $ 1,174,313.65

   Motion by Commissioner Lamour, supported by Commissioner Hoffman to accept the 09/17/2025 Accounts Payable Current Claims Report in the amount of $ 1,174,313.65 and approve the Claims for the date and amount presented.

   Roll call by Clerk as follows:

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

Motion carried.

XI. CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of Non-Claims
   a. Check Register dated 09/05/2025 in the amount of $ 273,570.34
   b. Check Register dated 09/12/2025 in the amount of $ 574,959.82

   Motion by Commissioner Swartout, supported by Commissioner Lamour 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	David Swartout	Dawn Asper			
Greg Moore, Jr.	Brian Lamour	Jay Heinzerling			
David Vensel	J. Henry Lievens				

Motion carried.

XII. COMMUNICATIONS

1. Letter dated September 3, 2025 from Annamarie Osment, Monroe County Clerk/Register of Deeds requesting consideration of appointments for two (2) seats set to expire on the Board of Canvassers on October 31, 2025. Names have been submitted from both the Republican Party and the Democratic Party. One (1) person from each party needs to be appointed for a term to commence on November 1, 2025 and end of October 31, 2029.

   Chairman Todd Gillman from the Republican Party submitted the following name:
   - Vicki Kipf (Seeking Reappointment)

   Motion by Commissioner Swartout, supported by Commissioner Lamour to accept the communication, place it on file and appoint Vicki Kipf to a seat on the Board of Canvassers for the term commencing November 1, 2026, and ending October 31, 2029.

   Roll call by Clerk as follows:

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

   Motion carried

   Chairman Rick Kull from the Democrat Party submitted the following names:
   - Christine Chickeral (Seeking Reappointment)
   - Cynthia Vincent
   - Gloria Rafko

   Motion by Commissioner Lamour, supported by Commissioner Hoffman to accept the communication, place it on file and appoint Christine Chickeral to a seat on the Board of Canvassers for the term commencing November 1, 2026, and ending October 31, 2029.

   Commissioner Moore asked for clarification on this.

   Annamarie Osment explained each party had an option to submit three (3) names but they were only required to submit one (1). Ms. Osment further explained this Board works so well together you cannot tell which person belongs to which political party. They get the job done quickly and effectively which is the reasoning for her recommendation(s).

   Roll call by Clerk as follows:

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

Motion carried.

2. Letter dated September 16, 2025 from Mr. Jason Berry, Community Planning & Engagement Director requesting acceptance of a Peer Group member resignation and approval of the addition of two (2) new members to the Monroe County Monumentation and Remonumentation Peer Group.

   Motion by Commissioner Heinzerling, supported by Commissioner Asper to accept the Peer Group member resignation and approve the addition of two (2) new members to the Monroe County Monumentation and Remonumentation Peer Group.

   Roll call by Clerk as follows:

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

   Motion carried.

3. Letter dated September 11, 2025 from Mr. Michael Bosanac, Administrator/Chief Financial Officer related to the Monroe Loop Trail Project and for the Board to determine any consideration for replacing driveway turn arounds, landscape areas and other items removed from the right-of-way during construction of the trail project.

   Discussion was held.

   Motion by Commissioner Heinzerling, supported by Commissioner Hoffman to refer staff to begin repairing the six (6) turnarounds damaged, not to exceed $66,500 on a public safety and good faith basis.

   Roll call by Clerk as follows:

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

   Motion carried.

XIII. PUBLIC HEARINGS — None

1. Robert Sheldon Duncanson Statue Location

   Discussion was held. Nancy Colpert explained this Statue would be in the Southwest grassy corner of Loranger Square by the First Presbyterian Church and Doris Memorial Library. Ms. Colpert also explained they want to put up a sign that says “future home of the Robert Sheldon Duncanson Statue”. Ms. Colpert further explained who Robert Duncanson was and stated it is time to honor him.

   Commissioner Hoffman stated he would be donating any dirt or digging they may need.

   Motion by Commissioner Lamour, supported by Commissioner Hoffman to refer staff to work with the committee on this statue location.

XIV. OLD BUSINESS—

XV. NEW BUSINESS—

XVI. PUBLIC COMMENT—

1. Jeffery Alburgo: Shared the history of Robert Duncanson. Stated he was a continuous resident of Monroe even though he traveled quite a bit. Explained that Mr. Duncanson was the Father of Canadian Landscape Painting. Mr. Alburgo also explained he has spent many years doing hard studying on Mr. Duncanson.

2. Brian Harwood: Explained that if Mr. Brant was sitting on the dais the last vote would have been stale mate, he believed. Referred to Chairman Vensel's comment about being hoodwinked and stated he doesn't see how that is when 7,000 voters voted for him. Mr. Harwood stated he believes spending money to fight in court is a waste of taxpayer dollars.

3. Steven Meyer: Mr. Meyer named off the elected officials that signed qualifying petitions for Mark Brant to appear on the November ballot. Explained his worries with Mark Brant being an inmate and stated he has concerns for the state of Monroe County.

4. Dale DeSloover: Explained the County should be aware that over the last few years people have made the steps of First presbyterian Church across the street their home. Mr. DeSloover stated he doesn't have an issue with this but he does have an issue with the fact that they have nowhere to use the restroom. Asked the City and the County to work together on this.

XVII. ANNOUNCEMENTS—

1. Copies of any Special Tributes or Certificates issued since the September 2, 2025 meeting:
    a. Special Tribute recognizing Mr. Martin Kaufman for years of dedication to the Commission on Aging Board.

The Board agreed to present this at the next meeting since Martin Kaufman was not in attendance.

XVIII. MEMBERS TIME –

Commissioner Moore – Stated he read Robert Duncanson's biography and it states he painted and did carpentry in Monroe with his father so older farm houses standing today might have been painted by him.

Commissioner Swartout – Passed.

Commissioner Lamour – Stated the request for the restroom is a little improbable because it would need to be staffed and monitored and he is unsure if we have the manpower to do so.

Commissioner Heinzerling – Passed.

Commissioner Asper – Explained she has noticed Steven Meyer comes up quite often and stated there could be other reasons the named individuals signed the petition. It could be that they know Mark Brant is qualified for the job and explained there are different ways to interpret things. Stated there aren't two hundred seventy (270) elected officials that signed that petition because we do not have that many. Stated she is excited for the statue and advised them to keep funds in legacy for upkeep on the statue. She also explained she is very happy about the resolution(s) and she really hopes someone will listen to them all.

Commissioner Hoffman – Hoping to make the statute as nice as we can for Monroe. Told Mr. Meyer to keep coming because what he finds is good medicine to let the real people know what is all about. Stated there is right and wrong here and we can't establish that. Explained that someday, Jesus is going to take a hold of this and it's going to be God who says who the bad guys are and who the good guys are. If we don't fight this, we don't want to fall on the bad side of evil. Also explained there is teamwork from the republicans and the democrats to get this Resolution on the ballot in a few years.

Vice-Chairman Lievens – Passed.

Michael Bosanac – Explained the plan for fiscal year 2026 for the MIDC office was approved by the Michigan Indigent Defense Commission last Friday. Explained this was one (1) of thirteen (13) plans that were approved. Stated there are still eighty-two (82) plans in Michigan not approved. Stated our funding was also approved at $2.65 million with a $217,000 local match. Further explained the next steps of the process to get this completed. Thanked the Board for the vote concerning the loop trail and explained the process of rebuilding items removed from the right-of-way.

Chairman Vensel – Passed.

XIX. CLOSED SESSION

1. Closed Session to consult with Monroe County legal counsel regarding trial or settlement strategy in connection with Monroe County and Monroe County Board of Commissioners vs. Mark S. Brant, Monroe County Circuit Court Case No. 2025-149222-CZ, and Mark Brant vs. Monroe County Board of Commissioners, Monroe County Circuit Court Case No. 2025-149230-CZ.

   The Board voted to move this closed session after the first closed session at the beginning of the meeting.

XX. ADJOURNMENT - Chairman Vensel adjourned the meeting at 9:07 p.m. with no further business to discuss.

Respectfully submitted by:

Grace Miles

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