# MONROE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
# REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
# JANUARY 20, 2026

## I. CALL TO ORDER

The Monroe County Board of Commissioners held a Regular Meeting in the City of Monroe, on Tuesday, January 20, 2026. 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 Hoffman | David Vensel | David Swartout | |
| Greg Moore, Jr. | Dawn Asper | | |

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

## III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Swartout led the Pledge of Allegiance.

## IV. OPENING PRAYER

Deputy Clerk, Grace Miles led the Opening Prayer.

## V. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Commissioner Swartout, supported by Commissioner Heinzerling to approve the January 20, 2026 Regular Meeting Agenda as presented.

Tom Graham, Legal Advisor explained the second closed session should be titled "to discuss confidential attorney client communication pursuant to MCL 15.268(1)(h)". The Board agreed.

Roll call by Clerk as follows:

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

Motion carried.

## VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (01/06/2026 Regular Meeting Minutes)

Motion by Commissioner Lievens, supported by Commissioner Hoffman to approve the minutes as presented for the January 6, 2026 Regular Meeting and waive the reading thereof.

Roll call by Clerk as follows:

| AYE | | | NAY | EXCUSED | ABSTAIN |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| David Hoffman | Greg Moore, Jr. | J. Henry Lievens | | | |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Dawn Asper | Brian Lamour | David Swartout | | | |
| David Vensel | Jay Heinzerling | | | | |

Motion carried.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT—

1. Darcy Piedmonte: Shared her concerns regarding the district two (2) vacancy. Stated when a report is received from the investigation, she hopes the board will act as leaders and put the good of this community ahead of any individual.

2. Mike Shufeld: Stated he was there to advocate for the Monroe Police, County Sheriff, and Michigan State troopers. Explained they have kept us safe and allowing a federal force to come in is a humiliation to every member of law enforcement.

3. Donald Crowley: Stated he supports the ICE contract. Explained he has transported someone and it is not an easy job. Inquired if the County takes this money out of the budget, where would it come from. Highly recommended the Board keeps the contract.

4. Christi Witson: Shared her concerns regarding the district two (2) vacancy and the related court ruling. Inquired if the board is going to give the money back to the taxpayers. Stated she hopes the board goes into closed session to iron this out.

5. Steven Meyer: Discussed a town hall meeting held in Monroe on January 19th and explained he has questions regarding said meeting as well as who attended.

6. Cole Bean: Shared her concerns regarding the ICE contract. Explained past protests she has participated in. Stated she has family living in Minnesota that is seeing everything first hand. Shared her concerns regarding Custer as well.

7. Nicole: Read a quote aloud from Harriet Jacobs' book, "Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl". Shared her concerns regarding the ICE contract as well as their agents.

8. Haley Casses: Quoted Martin Luther King Jr. Explained her concerns regarding law enforcement corruption. Urged the board to care more for our people, community, and our moral's rather than division and money by revoking the contract with ICE.

9. Katy Beth-Davis: Thanked Public Safety for keeping them safe during their protests as well as the Prosecutors office for taking the online threats seriously. Stated she is inspired by how many public comments there have been. Shared her concerns regarding the ICE contract and agents. Recommended the Board rescind this agreement.

10. Nadean: Stated the ICE agreement started in 2008 and a lot has changed since then. Discussed the situations with ICE and stated it is an attempt to control through fear. Explained the rates of the ICE agreement and said this is a cash cow.

11. Dustin: Shared he grew up in South Texas on the border so he is speaking from experience. Stated the contracts are in place to help the lives of those people that are being taken advantage of and explained some scenarios he saw firsthand. Stated this is a different aspect that he wants everyone to look at.

12. Cody: Spoke out against the ICE contract the County has. Stated taking money from them is taking blood money.

13. Kyle Cell: Explained he is new to the County and recently learned of the ICE contracts. Shared concerns regarding said contract. Discussed the percentage of detainees that were never found guilty. Stated he was unaware district two (2) doesn't have a representative and hopes something can be done about that.

14. Ashley: Discussed how history is viewed in her classroom and elaborated on her concerns regarding the ICE contract. Explained some personal experiences and stated students are afraid to come to school. She proposed that the Board rescind the contract with ICE. Quoted Martin Luther King Jr.

15. Devin Benois: Shared his concerns with the ICE contract. Explained they have not been protecting anybody and nobody they are currently detaining is a threat to any of us.

16. Omar Ferd: Asked for the board to rescind the contract but explained what he is really asking is for them to say no to some money. Stated he was hoping somebody could let him know what revenue was brought in last year from this contract.

    Chairman Vensel explained Sheriff Goodnough is more than willing to set up a time to meet to discuss any questions members of the public may have.

17. Cody: Shared his concerns regarding the contract and situations happening in the world. Explained this makes him further fearful of seeing how federal forces are being used today. Took the time to speak today in defense of other people and their well-being.

18. Morain Sharp: Stated her son-in-law is an immigrant. He is now a citizen and it took him ten (10) years. Explained the life he went through as well as what he did to become a citizen. Explained they have to pay for each step. Stated she is scared for her grand boys.

19. Candance Ferrell: Stated a majority of the County supports law enforcement and the ICE facility. Explained the extreme behavior of the ICE protestors and this disrespect for law enforcement has to stop. Stated the comment comparing ICE behavior to concentration camps is extremely offensive.

VIII. RESOLUTIONS, SPECIAL TRIBUTES & PRESENTATION —

1. Special Tribute congratulating United Way of Monroe/Lenawee Counties on their 100-year anniversary

    Commissioner Swartout explained he presented this at the grand opening that was at the museum. Stated they have a display there for two (2) months of everything the United Way has done in 100 years as well as this resolution.

    Andrew Clark, Museum Director, stated it was a great evening last Thursday. There was a lot of media coverage and a lot of people in attendance to mark the 100th anniversary of United Way, which is one of the largest charitable arms in Monroe County. Stated it is nice to see a continuity of caring from the community. As Commissioner Swartout mentioned, there is an exhibit that will be up through March 15, 2026.

IX. CLOSED SESSION

1. Closed Session to discuss confidential attorney client communication pursuant to MCL 15.268(1)(h).

   Motion by Vice-Chairman Lamour, supported by Commissioner Hoffman to go into closed session to discuss confidential attorney client communication pursuant to MCL 15.268(1)(h).

   Roll call by Clerk as follows:

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

   Motion carried.

2. Closed Session to discuss Indigent Defense Forensic Audit.

   Motion by Commissioner Lievens, supported by Vice-Chairman Lamour to go into closed session to discuss confidential attorney client communication pursuant to MCL 15.268(1)(h) regarding the Forensic Audit.

   Roll call by Clerk as follows:

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

   Motion carried.

   Motion by Commissioner Lievens, supported by Vice-Chairman Lamour to go back in open session.

   Pursuant to the first item of closed session, motion by Commissioner Lievens, supported by Vice-Chairman Lamour to follow the advice of counsel.

   Roll call by Clerk as follows:

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

   Motion carried.

   Motion by Commissioner Lievens, supported by Vice-Chairman Lamour to follow advice of our forensic accountant and counsel.

   Chairman Vensel thanked Commissioner Asper for pointing this out.

Roll call by Clerk as follows:

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

Motion carried.

X. FINANCE MATTERS

1. Payment of the 01/21/2026 Accounts Payable Current Claims Report in the amount of $1,581,268.49

Motion by Commissioner Swartout, supported by Vice-Chairman Lamour to confirm the 01/21/2026 Accounts Payable Current Claims Report in the amount of $1,581,268.49.

Roll call by Clerk as follows:

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

Motion carried.

XI. CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of Non-Claims

    a. Check Register dated 01/09/2026 in the amount of $ 312,107.44
    b. Check Register dated 01/16/2026 in the amount of $1,019,988.24

Motion by Vice-Chairman Lamour, supported by Commissioner Hoffman 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 | | | |
| Dawn Asper | Brian Lamour | David Swartout | | | |
| David Vensel | Jay Heinzerling | | | | |

Motion carried.

XII. COMMUNICATIONS

1. Letter dated January 14, 2026 from Mr. Andrew Clark, Museum Director requesting approval to apply for a grant through America250MI for up to $50,000 with a 30% match from the Monroe County Museum System Millage.

Commissioner Moore asked for more information.

Andrew Clark explained they applied last year but did not receive it. This year's idea is to do an introductory video regarding the Custer family and we are hoping to get additional funding.

Motion by Commissioner Hoffman, supported by Vice-Chairman Lamour to approve the application for a grant through America250MI for up to $50,000 with a 30% match from the Monroe County Museum System Millage.

Roll call by Clerk as follows:

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

Motion carried.

2. Letter dated January 13, 2026 from Mr. David Vensel Chairman, Board of Commissioners providing the 2026 Board of Commissioners Committee appointments.

   Commissioner Asper asked for reconsideration of the Monroe County Mental Health Authority Appointment. Explained she has been on that board for a lot of years so she understands this is a very crucial time where part of mental health might be privatized. Stated she also has a degree in neuroscience so she questions the wisdom on this decision.

   Motion by Vice-Chairman Lamour, supported by Commissioner Hoffman to accept the Chairman's communication and place it on file as a permanent record of the 2026 Committee appointments.

   Roll call by Clerk as follows:

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

Motion carried.

XIII. PUBLIC HEARINGS — None

XIV. OLD BUSINESS—

1. Investigation Funding Discussion

   Enclosed see the payment summary to date with projections for incurred but not yet invoiced amounts.

   Motion by Vice-Chairman Lamour, supported by Commissioner Heinzerling to approve payment of the Bodman Law outstanding bills from October to present day.

   Commissioner Swartout inquired why Ms. Gabis did not come back and request more money like she had in the past.

Chairman Vensel stated he doesn't know and he's unsure how it wasn't picked up sooner.

Commissioner Asper stated at a previous meeting she asked how much money had been used so far and the Chairman said he was going to check but the Board didn't get a report afterwards. Explained she is concerned this could have been handled differently.

Commissioner Swartout suggested tabling this item to get their questions answered.

Chairman Vensel explained Ms. Gabis answered questions, informed the board of additional billings to come, and explained many other things at the last meeting. Stated he wasn't there.

Commissioner Asper stated the amount of extra money was mentioned before January so let's not do that because some weren't able to attend. Explained she called the office ahead of time and two Commissioners tried to get the meeting rescheduled on the Friday before so its not like people didn't try to get the situation cleared up.

Commissioner Moore discussed the enclosed payment summary and stated he definitely thinks the Board should pay her the $70,000 they voted for but she knew the budget eight (8) months ago so he is unsure why she is going over.

Chairman Vensel stated Ms. Gabis explained she has an obligation to complete her work.

Commissioner Asper explained this is not how another investigation of theirs was handled. Commissioner Asper also discussed the meaning of the word completed.

Chairman Vensel explained at some point the Board has to pay its outstanding bills to this firm so we can get the completed report.

Roll call by Clerk as follows:

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

Motion carried.

2. Michigan Indigent Defense Commission update

Commissioner Lievens asked to keep this under old business until the item in concluded with finality.

XV. NEW BUSINESS—

XVI. PUBLIC COMMENT—

1. Steven Meyer: Inquired if there is an expected timeline on when the public is going to see anything from the investigation.

2. Devin Benois: Asked Commissioner Asper if her viewpoint on her career changed in her

forty-four (44) years.

Commissioner Asper stated she can talk to him after the meeting.

3. Caleb: Shared his concerns with the ICE Contract and ICE behavior. Asked the board to publicly oppose ICE operations in Monroe County, refuse cooperation in any form, and revoke the current contracts as quickly as possible.

XVII. ANNOUNCEMENTS—

1. Copies of any Special Tributes or Certificates issued since the January 6, 2025 meeting: None.

XVIII. MEMBERS TIME –

Commissioner Asper – Stated her viewpoint on the situation regarding Renee Good. Explained the history of the Custer statue and urged the public to read and research more and not to just attack. There is a lot going on that cannot be seen, asked for grace. Thanked the public for sharing their comments.

Commissioner Moore – Passed.

Commissioner Swartout – Passed.

Commissioner Heinzerling – Passed.

Commissioner Lievens – Thanked the public for their participation in public comment.

Commissioner Hoffman – Passed.

Vice-Chairman Lamour – Explained he appreciates the public comments as well as the civility of everyone tonight. This shows we can hear other opinions without just criticizing. Stated he appreciates everything that was done.

Chairman Vensel – Stated he concurs with Commissioner Lievens and Vice-Chairman Lamour.

XIX. 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