

COUNTY'S OVERTIME COSTS DRAW SCRUTINY

Officials to review 2 airport positions

By **Mandy Miles** - May 15, 2026



Monroe County's overtime pay policy, which is more generous than federal requirements, cost the county nearly \$365,000 in 2025, and recently prompted a closer look by the county clerk's finance department.

The clerk's office last month sent an advisory to County Administrator Christine Hurley outlining its findings and concerns. The county's overtime policy, enacted in 2021, allows hourly employees to get overtime pay (time and a half) even if they don't physically work more than 40 hours in a week.

"With the passage of its policy, the county commission broadened the definition of 'hours worked' to include holiday vacation, sick time or compensatory time in addition to physical hours worked when calculating an employee's overtime pay," the advisory states.



In other words, if an employee works on a federal Monday holiday, and then uses a vacation day on Tuesday, the eight hours of vacation time count toward the 40-hour tally under the county's policy. Under the federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), overtime is only paid when an employee physically works more than 40 hours in a week.

Airport overtime draws scrutiny

The clerk's advisory also questions the amount of overtime being paid to salaried, non-hourly employees who are exempt from overtime pay except during emergencies.

"While the intent of the policy is that exempt overtime should be a rarity, exempt (non-hourly) employees were paid \$209,051 in 2025 when there was no obvious event to necessitate an unusually large amount of overtime," the advisory states.

More concerning, the review notes, is that two airport managers received 70% of that overtime amount in 2025.

"The assistant director of airports and the deputy director of airport operations and security were paid a combined total of \$146,996 in overtime in the past calendar year," the document states.

In 2025, the deputy director of airport operations and security, Luis Garay, earned a salary of \$162,831 plus an additional \$91,973 in overtime, despite being an exempt, non-hourly worker.

Similarly, the assistant director of airports, Scott Guidry, who was hired in March 2025 with an annual salary of \$167,213, received an additional \$55,023 in overtime in 2025.

Garay did not return messages seeking comment, and Guidry was not listed in the county's online staff directory as of May 12.



"For the deputy director, whose employment began in September 2019, overtime has been consistently and increasingly inordinate for many years, indicating that the supervisor has not taken effective action to mitigate the recurring charging of overtime," the advisory states. "Likewise, the assistant director, who was hired in March 2025, is beginning his employment with a similar overtime pattern."

The clerk's office review found that the two employees regularly pre-filled their time cards, claiming overtime in advance.

"This practice of pre-filling out timecards includes the observed practice of using the 'Auto-Fill From Prior Week' function to copy timecards using the same overtime schedule on multiple successive time periods," the advisory states. "The recurring and preplanned nature indicates that overtime does not appear to be driven by emergencies or on an as-needed basis."

The county commission will discuss the overtime advisory at its May 20 meeting in Key West, where they will also hear from the county's director of airports, who oversees the two positions in question and approves their overtime requests.

"There will be an investigation to see if any wrongdoing took place," Hurley said when the Keys Weekly asked whether the county intends to investigate any potential fraud, misconduct or falsification of documents.

"During the airport construction there was a serious need for extra ramp control to guide planes and other operations around the construction, which resulted in overtime in a lot of areas," Hurley said. "Airports Director Richard Strickland will be discussing this at the May meeting with the BOCC."

County Mayor Michelle Lincoln declined to comment on the matter before she had met with county staff.



"My briefing with staff has not occurred yet for our commission meeting," Lincoln said. "At the commission meeting, Richard Strickland will be filling us in with more details. So at this point, I really don't have anything additional to say."

Commissioner Craig Cates said the same, adding, "I'm concerned about the use of that much overtime and we will be discussing it at the commission meeting and will make any changes if necessary in our policy."

Subscribe To Our Newsletter

Get Keys Weekly delivered right to your inbox along with a daily dose of Keys News.



Email

SUBSCRIBE!

MANDY MILES

Mandy Miles drops stuff, breaks things and falls down more than any adult should. An award-winning writer, reporter and columnist, she's been stringing words together in Key West since 1998. "Local news is crucial," she says. "It informs and connects a community. It prompts conversation. It gets people involved, holds people accountable. The Keys Weekly takes its

responsibility seriously. Our owners are raising families in Key West & Marathon. Our writers live in the communities we cover - Key West, Marathon & the Upper Keys. We respect our readers. We question our leaders. We believe in the Florida Keys community. And we like to have a good time." Mandy's married to a saintly — and handy — fishing captain, and can't imagine living anywhere else.

