

Montgomery County Board Special Meeting Minutes

For Thursday, May 28th, 2020 – 5:30 PM

The following are minutes of a special meeting of the Montgomery County Board held at 5:30 PM on Thursday, May 28th, 2020, in the County Board Room, 2nd floor of the Historic Courthouse, Hillsboro, Illinois. This special meeting was held in accordance with 55 ILCS 5/2-1002 due to a petition signed by at least one-third of the County Board members. This petition was signed by the following ten County Board members: Dennis McCammack, Glenn Bishop, Mark Hughes, Earlene Robinson, Glenn Savage, Jeremy Jones, Kirby Furness, Sandra Johnson, Connie Beck and Donna Yeske. **(For copy of Petition and Special Meeting Notice, see Resolution Book 18, pages 43-44).** Due to COVID-19, this meeting was held via phone conference with some members, but other members were in attendance.

The meeting was called to order by County Board Chairman Evan Young at 5:30 PM.

Roll call was taken - 20 members present, 1 member absent.

Members Present: Connie Beck, Megan Beeler, Bill Bergen, Glenn Bishop, Ronald Deabenderfer, Tim Fogle, Kirby Furness, Chuck Graden, Mark Hughes, Sandra Johnson, Jeremy Jones, David Loucks, Dennis McCammack, Gene Miles, Jim Moore, Earlene Robinson, Glenn Savage, Bob Sneed, Donna Yeske, and Evan Young.

Member Absent: Richard Wendel

Pledge of Allegiance to the flag was led by County Board member Bob Sneed.

COORDINATING COMMITTEE: Given by Chairman Evan Young:

1. **“A Proclamation of the Montgomery County Board in Support of Montgomery County Businesses, Organizations and Houses of Worship” Update/Approval:** Chairman Young directed County Clerk Sandy Leitheiser to read the Proclamation, which she did. Motion by Sneed and second by Robinson to approve the Proclamation of the Montgomery County Board in Support of Montgomery Businesses, Organizations and Houses of Worship. General discussion followed.

Member Bill Bergen offered his support for the Proclamation and stated he feels state government has gone too far in taking away rights and freedoms of local residents.

Member Jim Moore stated he felt this Proclamation is unnecessary, as Phase 3 of the Restore Illinois plan would be starting the next day. Moore also said the Montgomery County Health Department should have had input into the Proclamation since it deals with public health issues. He stated he is not a medical person, but the Health Department has staff trained to deal with these types of situations, and he trusts them. Moore also said he would not be submitting a *per diem* pay request for this meeting.

Member Mark Hughes spoke in favor of the Proclamation, stating he hopes it would help many of the small businesses who are hurting. He added he knows the County Board can't officially re-open businesses without jeopardizing state funding, but he felt the Proclamation would offer support for local businesses. He asked about the potential of the Revolving Loan Fund being revamped and used for this purpose, and he requested the County Board be updated by the Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation on their activities to help businesses impacted by the COVID-19 shutdown.

Member Donna Yeske added her support for the Proclamation and stated Montgomery County should be opening in advance of Cook County. She informed members the Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation's Valerie Belusko has been watching for available grants and assisting local businesses during the COVID-19 shutdown.

Member Jeremy Jones stated he would like to see local businesses opened immediately, and he requested the County Board consider his request. He asked State's Attorney Bryant Hitchings about his role when businesses wish to reopen in advance of the Governor's schedule. Hitchings responded his office doesn't have much authority over this process, but stated there are significant risks to businesses who continue to operate during the pandemic. Hitchings said if this lack of compliance takes place, he can send a quarantine notice to the business at the health department's request.

Member Glenn Bishop stated he felt it is important for the County Board to show leadership for businesses and help them with Revolving Loan funds or tourism funds. He said it is important to retain our businesses.

Circuit Clerk Holly Lemons said she felt the Proclamation was too late and a waste of taxpayer dollars. She stated the Proclamation gives a false sense of security; and, while she supports local businesses, she feels it is a feel-good measure at a cost to the taxpayers.

County Clerk Sandy Leitheiser stated the idea of a Proclamation came as she and Sheriff Rick Robbins were discussing how the county could help local businesses, organizations and churches as they seek to safely re-open. She said she supports the efforts of EMA and the Montgomery County Health Department, who both must follow the Governor's Executive Order to the letter. She also stated the county's liability insurance company has reviewed the Proclamation and approved its wording so the county would not be held liable if it's misinterpreted.

Member Glenn Savage stated his support for the Proclamation, saying the measure is not political posturing, but instead is a show of support and readiness by the County Board.

Chairman Young then asked if anyone from the public wanted to speak, and local attorney Tom Devore of Sorento stated his support for the Proclamation. Devore said he has been representing several businesses in this matter and told board members this Proclamation is not a futile exercise, but instead will give them hope that the County Board is here to help in any way they can.

Litchfield Mayor Steve Dougherty stated he is in support of the Proclamation because it sends a statement to our legislators that a bi-partisan effort is in place to accelerate re-opening our part of the state.

Member Kirby Furness said he supports the Proclamation to support Montgomery County businesses.

Member Megan Beeler said she supports the Proclamation, but she feels it is an injustice to say someone who doesn't support it also doesn't support county businesses. She also said she didn't appreciate the insinuation County Board leadership hasn't done enough, stating the chairman has worked diligently and above and beyond his regular duties. Beeler also questioned if municipalities in the county are also taking up similar measures since the County Board only has jurisdiction over the unincorporated areas.

Health Department Director Hugh Satterlee updated members and gave high praise for both hospitals in the county who have stepped up to the plate and encouraged residents to continue to support their efforts by following the current guidelines. He said he was not saying businesses should not be open, but it takes more than Montgomery County to accomplish this goal. He encouraged everyone to wear masks in public to protect others as well as themselves.

Treasurer Nikki Lohman encouraged members to think about whether they will vote to extend the disaster declaration at their upcoming June meeting, which will be needed if the county seeks reimbursement for funding expended during the pandemic. She said if the Proclamation is approved at this meeting and a disaster declaration is approved at the June meeting, a mixed message would be sent. **Roll Call Vote:** Voting Yes were: Connie Beck, Megan Beeler, Bill Bergen, Glenn Bishop, Ronald Deabenderfer, Tim Fogle, Kirby Furness, Mark Hughes, Jeremy Jones, David Loucks, Dennis McCammack, Gene Miles, Earlene Robinson, Glenn Savage, Bob Sneed, Donna Yeske, and Evan Young. Voting No were Graden and Moore. Johnson (was on call for roll call earlier, but not on call when vote was taken) and Wendel were absent. **17 Yes, 2 No and 2 absent. Motion carried. (For copy of Proclamation, see Resolution Book 18, pages 45-47).**

2. Motion by Furness and second by Robinson to send the signed Proclamation to the Governor. Voice Vote: 17 Yes, 2 No. Voting No were Graden and Moore. Wendel and Johnson were absent. **Motion carried.**

3. Motion by McCammack and second by Hughes to send the Proclamation to our legislators. Voice Vote: 18 Yes, 1 No and 2 absent. Voting No was Jim Moore; all others were in favor. Wendel and Johnson were absent. **Motion carried.**

SCHEDULE CHANGES: None

APPOINTMENTS: None

Adjourn: Until the Full Board on Tuesday, June 9th, 2020 at 5:30 PM in the County Board Room, Hillsboro, Illinois. Motion by Furness and second by Loucks to Adjourn the Special Board Meeting. All in favor, motion carried. Meeting Adjourned at 7:15 PM. Minutes respectfully recorded and submitted by Montgomery County Clerk and Recorder Sandy Leitheiser.