

Montgomery County Board Minutes **For Wednesday, November 12, 2025 – 5:30 PM**

The following are minutes of a regular meeting of the Montgomery County Board held at 5:30 p.m. in the County Board Room of the Historic Courthouse in Hillsboro, Illinois on Wednesday, November 12, 2025. The meeting was called to order by County Board Chairman Doug Donaldson at 5:30 PM.

Roll call was taken – 14 members present, 0 members absent.

Members Present: Russell Beason, Connie Beck, Bill Bergen, Rob Corso, Chris Daniels, Doug Donaldson, Keith Hancock, Mark Hughes, Jeremy Jones, Ethan Murzynski, Andy Ritchie, Chad Ruppert, Patty Whitworth, Evan Young

Members Absent: None

Pledge of Allegiance to the flag was led by Vice Chairwoman and Veteran Patty Whitworth in honor of Veterans Day.

Mileage and Per Diem Approval: Claims for mileage and per diem were read by County Clerk Sandy Leitheiser. **Motion by Corso and second by Hughes to approve the mileage and per diem. ROLL CALL VOTE:** Voting yes: Beason, Beck, Bergen, Corso, Daniels, Donaldson, Hancock, Hughes, Jones, Murzynski, Ritchie, Ruppert, Whitworth, Young. **All in favor, motion carried.**

Approval of Minutes of Previous County Board Meeting: **Motion by Beason and second by Ritchie to approve the minutes of the previous regular County Board meeting held on Tuesday, October 14, 2025. All in favor, motion carried.**

CONSENT AGENDA:

1. **Animal Control Report** – Tricia Papin was present for questions.
2. **Circuit Clerk's Report** – Daniel Robbins was present for questions.
3. **Coroner's Report** – Randy Leetham was not present.
4. **County Clerk and Recorder's Report** – Sandy Leitheiser was present for questions.
5. **Enterprise Zone Report** – Mike Plunkett was present for questions.
6. **EMA & EPA Reports** – Dan Hough was present for questions.
7. **Health Department Report** – Hugh Satterlee was present for questions.
8. **Highway Department Report** – Cody Greenwood was present for questions.
9. **Maintenance Superintendent Report** – Phil Ernst was not present.
10. **Probation Office Report** – Banee Ulrici was present for questions.
11. **Public Defender's Report** – Erin Mattson was not present.
12. **ROE – Monthly, Quarterly & Annual Reports** – Julie Wollerman was not present.
13. **Sheriff's Report** – Tyson Holshouser was not present.
14. **SOA Report** – Tysha Mullen was present for questions.
15. **State's Attorney Report** – Brian Shaw was present for questions.
16. **Treasurer's Report** – Nikki Lohman was present for questions.
17. **VAC Report** – Cassandra Hampton was present for questions.

APPROVAL OF ITEMS ON THE CONSENT AGENDA:

Motion by Murzynski and second by Hughes to approve the items on the Consent Agenda. All in favor, motion carried.

LIAISON REPORTS:

- **CEFS Board** — Beason had nothing to report.
- **708 Board** – Murzynski reported the committee met Nov. 10, 2025 to sign award documents, and he will announce the winners next month.
- **ETSB / 911 Board** – Bergen deferred to 911 Director Ed Boyd, who reported progress on the DCEO grant-funded Cress Hill tower building.
- **Health Department** — Whitworth reported the Health Department has no jurisdiction over water quality.
- **IL Association of County Officials** — Hancock had nothing to report.
- **MCEDC** — Daniels reported working with the Executive Director on numerous projects.
- **Planning Commission** — Ritchie had nothing to report.
- **Senior Citizens Board** — Daniels reported awarding DCEO grant-funded bids.
- **UCCI** – Corso reported attending a meeting on Oct. 24, 2025.
- **U of I** – Ruppert reported the Oct. 16, 2025 meeting focused on SNAP benefits and determining 2026 priorities.
- **WCDC** – Jones reported a meeting is set for Nov. 20, 2025.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

COORDINATING COMMITTEE: Given by County Board Chairman Doug Donaldson:

1. **Information Systems Report Update/Approval:** Donaldson said IS Director Curt Watkins reported his department has been working on security and audio updates funded by the court grant, updating servers, working on remote DevNet access for Township Assessors, and working at the Cress Hill Tower building replacement. He said the department has also converted fire and panic alarms to IP or cellular and eliminated the unneeded phone lines. Circuit Clerk Daniel Robbins noted a problem with the jury 800 number that took the phone company two weeks to repair. As a result, his office is replacing this number to alleviate the problem.
2. **Appointment of Montgomery County State's Attorney Update/Approval:** Donaldson read a letter from the Montgomery County Republican Central Committee recommending Brian Shaw. **Motion by Donaldson and second by Jones to appoint Brian Shaw as the Montgomery County State's Attorney. All in favor, motion carried.**
3. **Ad Hoc Committee to Address SB3455 Wooded Acreage Assessments Update/Approval:** The Ad Hoc Committee is scheduled to next meet on Tuesday, Nov. 18, 2025, to finalize their recommendations to the state.
4. **IDFPR Cemetery Relief Fund Grants Update/Approval:** Donaldson reported Assistant County Board Administrator Lucas Nowlan applied for a \$20,000 grant to make improvements to the County Farm Cemetery and Neece Cemetery in Audubon Township.
5. **2026 Meeting Dates & Times Update/Approval:** Donaldson reported the committee reviewed meeting dates for 2026. **Motion by Donaldson and second by Whitworth to approve the 2026 Montgomery County Board meeting dates. All in favor, motion carried.**

6. **Kane County Juvenile Detention Intergovernmental Agreement Update/Approval:** Motion by Donaldson and second by Ruppert to approve the intergovernmental agreement with Kane County for juvenile detention services. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 23, pages 103-110).

DEVELOPMENT & PERSONNEL COMMITTEE REPORT: Given by Committee Chairman Chad Ruppert:

1. **MCEDC Update/Approval:** Executive Director Kaitlyn Fath provided board members with a booklet and described the 501(c) 3 corporation's history since 2004, member benefits, program of work, and foundation, pointing out that economic development includes improving quality of life.
2. **Animal Control Update/Approval:** Ruppert said Animal Control Warden Tricia Papen reported many cats and long-term fosters have been adopted, and calls were down for the month. She continues to research fees and solicit proposals for enclosing the front of the facility. She also is considering changing facility hours to Tuesday through Saturday beginning Jan. 1, 2026 to better serve the public on the weekend.
3. **SOA Local 1084 Contract Update/Approval:** County Board Administration received a wage proposal on Monday, Nov. 3. Ruppert said he will reach out to the union to continue negotiations.
4. **DCEO Energy Transition Grant Update/Approval:** DCEO informed the county it had been awarded \$1,092,450.34 in the third phase of the Energy Transition Grant. An ad hoc committee meeting was held on Monday, Nov. 10, 2025 with grant writer Dan Rogers to begin determining projects to include in the grant.
5. **UCCI Summary of HA3 to SB25 (Energy Omnibus) Update/Approval:** Ruppert said the committee reviewed a summary from UCCI regarding House Bill Amendment 3 to SB 25, an energy omnibus piece of legislation requiring changes to the county solar and wind ordinances, including a cap on application fees. The proposed legislation would also create a uniform assessment method for commercial energy storage.
6. **Montgomery First Community Engagement Update/Approval:** Ruppert stated the committee reviewed changes to the proposed Montgomery First Community Solar Benefits Agreement suggested by Summit Ridge Energy. He said the committee requested feedback from Local 1084 and the Montgomery County State's Attorney.
7. **Employee Health Insurance Update/Approval:** Ruppert said the committee reviewed communication from Assured Partners stating Blue Cross Blue Shield and HSHS are currently in negotiations for a new contract and have not yet reached an agreement. He added Assured Partners notified the county later in the week after the committee meeting on Friday, Nov. 7, 2025 that due to "considerable progress in the negotiations, both parties have agreed to extend the deadline."
8. **Appointment of Supervisor of Assessments Update/Approval:** Ruppert reported Tysha Mullen has passed the required examination to become Supervisor of Assessments on the first try with an extremely high score, and the committee recommended her appointment. **Motion by Ruppert and second by Daniels to appoint Tysha Mullen as Montgomery County Supervisor of Assessments to a four-year term beginning Dec. 1, 2025, at a starting salary of \$72,500. All in favor, motion carried.** County Clerk Leitheiser administered the oath of office.

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS COMMITTEE REPORT: Given by Committee Chairman Mark Hughes:

1. **Maintenance Report Update/Approval:** Hughes said Maintenance Director Phil Ernst reviewed the 43 items on his report, including cleaning the County Clerk's record storage in the basement of the Historic Courthouse after flooding. The gutter pipes had collapsed due to tree branches, causing repeated flooding. The line needs to be replaced and rerouted to prevent future collapse. Hughes also reported Gardner Glass installed a panic bar, as well as a new full length door-hinge, on the south double door entrance to the Historic Courthouse.
2. **EV Charging Station Request Update/Approval:** Hillsboro City Commissioner Kendra Wright has a proposal to install grant-funded EV charging stations around Hillsboro, including one on Courthouse Square. Wright asked if the county would be willing to allow use of county internet to process payments. Whitworth added there is only one public charging station in the entire county (located in Litchfield), and she said adding more stations is important for tourism. Hughes said his committee will continue to consider options.
3. **Cinric Painting South Porch Estimate Update/Approval:** Hughes presented a proposal from Cinric Paining for \$17,900 to repair and paint the south porch of the Historic Courthouse. This will include the repair and repainting of the front porch columns, molding, trim, handrails, and second story corbels and soffit/fascia. **Motion by Hughes and second by Young to approve a proposal from Cinric Painting and Remodeling for \$17,900 to repair and paint the south porch of the Historic Courthouse in FY2026. All in favor, motion carried.**
4. **DCEO County Board Room Grant Update/Approval:** Hughes reported County Board Administration met with Double E Upholstery on Nov. 3, 2025, for a quote to have cushions made for the bench-style seating in the back of the County Board Room, and has since met with Cinric Paining about possible work on the judge's bench and railing. These expenses will be paid by the \$10,000 DCEO grant. He said the committee will review quotes next month.
5. **County Farm Lease Update/Approval:** Hughes said the lease of the County Farm is set to expire on April 30, 2026 and County Board Administration will update the lease to advertise for bids early next year.
6. **City of Hillsboro Request to Move Electric Service Update/Approval:** Hughes reported the City of Hillsboro would like to remove the power pole on the Courthouse Square and move the electric services behind the VAC building.
7. **DAR Plaque Honoring Gen. Richard Montgomery Update/Approval:** County Board member Whitworth (who is also a member of the local Daughter of the American Revolution chapter) asked the County Board to approve the installation of an 18x24 inch bronze plaque to honor Revolutionary War veteran General Richard Montgomery, in whose honor Montgomery County was named. The plaque will be mounted on the south side of the Historic Courthouse west of the doorway. **Motion by Hughes and second by Whitworth to allow the DAR to install a plaque honoring Gen. Richard Montgomery. All in favor, motion carried.**

ROADS & BRIDGES COMMITTEE REPORT: Given by Committee Chairman Ethan Murzynski:

1. **Pattern Energy – Shoals Renewable Wind/Solar Farm Update/Approval:** Murzynski reported North American energy developer Pattern Energy reached out to Engineer Cody Greenwood to begin discussion on installing a wind farm near the Raymond/Nokomis area. He said Pattern plans to start in 2026, apply for permitting in 2027, and begin construction in 2027.
2. **Nokomis Rd. (CH 7) Extension Project Update/Approval:** Murzynski said the committee continued to discuss the possibility of allowing the existing County Road (which runs through the City of Nokomis on E. Union Street) to be transferred to the City of Nokomis. Chairman Donaldson said he reached out to the Mayor of Nokomis to inquire about the progress on the extension project with no response to date.
3. **Vacating Streets and Alleys in Zanesville Update/Approval:** Murzynski reported the committee received an updated plat showing the vacated streets of Zanesville. The updated plat map was sent to Kevin Brink of GIS to review. He said the committee should have the accompanying petition at next month's meeting.
4. **Heavy Equipment Shed Update/Approval:** In response to public comments at the last county board meeting, Murzynski reported Engineer Greenwood reviewed the certified drawings signed by the structural engineer and verified the building meets all requirements.
5. **Resolution 2025-10 appropriating funds for the payment of the County Engineer's Salary for FY2026 Update/Approval:** Murzynski reported the state recommendation was a 3% salary increase, and the committee discussed raises between 3% and 5% and ultimately recommended a compromise at 4%. **Motion by Murzynski and second by Bergen to approve Resolution 2025-10 appropriating funds for the payment of the County Engineer's salary of \$137,546 for FY2026, a 4% increase. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 23, pages 111-112).**

FINANCE & BUDGET COMMITTEE REPORT: Given by Committee Chairman Andy Ritchie:

1. **SOA Office Update/Approval:** Ritchie reported after a tax cycle meeting was held on Nov. 5 with the Supervisor of Assessments office, Treasurer, and County Clerk; and work is on schedule for assessment changes to be published Dec. 1.
2. **Capital Improvement & Coal Fund Reports Update/Approval:** Ritchie noted a coal royalty payment of \$180,946.23 in September, resulting in a total Coal Fund balance of \$10,564,728.
3. **Insurance Package Renewal Update/Approval:** Ritchie said Eric Braasch of Dimond Brothers Insurance presented property/casualty/liability, work compensation, and cyber insurance renewal packages at an increase of \$35,000 (7.18%) for FY2026. Treasurer Lohman added the renewal premiums were within the anticipated budget. **Motion by Ritchie and second by Corso to approve of the FY2026 insurance package for a total of \$523,001. All in favor, motion carried. ROLL CALL VOTE:** Voting yes: Beason, Beck, Bergen, Corso, Daniels, Donaldson, Hancock, Hughes, Jones, Murzynski, Ritchie, Ruppert, Whitworth, Young. **All in favor, motion carried.**

4. **Pre-Approved Payment List Update/Approval:** Ritchie said County Clerk Sandy Leitheiser presented an amended Pre-Approved Payment List with the addition of the Village of Taylor Springs at the request of the Montgomery County Highway Department for sewer utility services at the new building. He said the County Clerk will also review vendors on the list for possible updates next month. **Motion by Ritchie and second by Beck to add the Village of Taylor Springs to the Pre-Approved Payment List. All in favor, motion carried.**
5. **Bellwether Quarterly Variance Report Update/Approval:** The committee reviewed the third quarter report from Bellwether.
6. **FY2026 Budget Update/Approval:** Ritchie stated at last month's meeting the board learned we had a \$900,000 General Fund deficit because Bellwether's spreadsheet did not pick up \$1,017,650.80 "General Administrative" expenses from Page 10 of the draft budget and include them in the "General Government" expense totals by department on Page 6. This resulted in General Fund expenses on Page 1 being under-reported by \$1,017,650.80 throughout the entire budget process. A special Finance & Budget Committee meeting was held on Oct. 23, 2025 to address the problem, and at that meeting the committee recommended increasing Solar Permit Fees revenue from \$75,000 to \$110,000; decreasing Professional Services expenses from \$21,600 to \$9,600; transferring \$322,692 in ARPA interest to the General Fund; and in the Coal Fund moving \$550,000 in contingencies to Transfer Out-General Fund. Further changes were made at the Nov. 6, 2025 regular Finance & Budget Committee meeting to more accurately reflect expenses in the Supervisor of Assessments' office and the addition of a Victim/Witness Advocate position in the State's Attorney's office. Since then, both the County Board Administration office staff and Treasurer Lohman have double and triple-checked Bellwether's spreadsheets and found other errors. After correcting those mistakes, the result is the FY2026 budget presented at this meeting anticipates a \$212,472.28 General Fund surplus. Bellwether representative Justin Greeley was present and told board members his company is not happy with the budget process this year and he apologized for the errors. Because of these errors, Greeley said Bellwether has waived the final \$6,000 payment but will continue to provide variance reports. Lohman reported she had received written approval from all county officeholders stating their portion of the recommended budget was accurate. **Motion by Ritchie and second by Jones to approve FY2026 County Board Budget Ordinance 2025-15. ROLL CALL VOTE:** Voting yes: Beason, Beck, Bergen, Corso, Daniels, Donaldson, Hancock, Hughes, Jones, Murzynski, Ritchie, Ruppert, Whitworth, Young. **All in favor, motion carried.**
7. **FY2026 Budget Appropriations/Levies/Resolutions Update/Approval:** **Motion by Ritchie and second by Beck to adopt the FY2026 Appropriation Ordinance. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Ritchie and second by Hughes to adopt the General Corporate Fund Levy Resolution 25-16 for \$949,636. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Ritchie and second by Young to adopt the County Health Department Levy Resolution 25-17 for \$901,292. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Ritchie and second by Whitworth to adopt the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund Levy Resolution 25-18 for \$665,645. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Ritchie and second by Hughes to adopt the Social Security Fund Levy Resolution 25-19 for \$649,818. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Ritchie and second by Murzynski to adopt the Insurance Premium Fund Levy Resolution 25-20**

for \$618,982. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Ritchie and second by Corso to adopt the County Highway Fund Levy Resolution 25-21 for \$643,000. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Ritchie and second by Hancock to adopt the County Highway Federal Aid Matching Fund Levy Resolution 25-22 for \$335,912. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Ritchie and second by Bergen to adopt the Special Aid to County Bridge Fund Levy Resolution 25-23 for \$321,500. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Ritchie and second by Daniels to adopt the Montgomery County Community Mental Health Board Levy Resolution 25-24 for \$992,410. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Ritchie and second by Ruppert to adopt the Hillsboro Special Service Area Levy Resolution 25-25 for \$300,000. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Ritchie and second by Young to adopt the Nokomis-Witt Special Service Area Levy Resolution 25-26 for \$438,943. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Ritchie and second by Jones to adopt the Raymond-Harvel Special Service Area Levy Resolution 25-27 for \$149,000. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Ritchie and second by Beck to adopt the Farmersville-Waggoner Special Service Area Levy Resolution 25-28 for \$119,700. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Ritchie and second by Hughes to adopt the County Extension Service Levy Resolution 25-29 for \$157,000. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Ritchie and second by Daniels to adopt the Senior Citizen Social Services Levy Resolution 25-30 for \$120,794. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Ritchie and second by Whitworth to adopt the Veterans Assistance Levy Resolution 25-31 for \$127,997. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Ritchie and second by Beason to adopt the Resolution 25-32 to Set Certain Salaries for the Supervisor of Assessments (\$72,500), Probation Officer (\$122,966), and Assistant Probation Officers (\$308,587.73). All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Ritchie and second by Murzynski to adopt the State's Attorney Appellate Prosecutor Resolution for \$12,000. All in favor, motion carried. (For copies of Budget and Levies, see County Budget on Montgomery County website).

8. **Transfer Parcel from Trustee Sale Update/Approval:** The committee reviewed a parcel sold at the trustee sale. Motion by Ritchie and second by Young to transfer parcel 20-22-333-015 in Grisham Township to Fatmir Dzabiri. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 23, pages 113-114).

APPROVAL OF THE COMMITTEE REPORTS & MINUTES:

Motion by Hancock and second by Daniels to approve the committee reports and minutes. All in favor, motion carried.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & SCHEDULE CHANGES:

1. The monthly meeting with Bushue HR has been scheduled for Thursday, Nov. 13, 2025 beginning at 1 p.m. in the County Board Room at the Historic Courthouse.
2. The next Property Tax Ad Hoc Advisory Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, Nov. 18, 2025 at 6 p.m. in the County Board Room at the Historic Courthouse.
3. Due to the Thanksgiving holiday, the next Coordinating Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, Nov. 26, 2025 at 8:30 a.m. in the County Board Room at the Historic Courthouse.

APPOINTMENTS:

1. **Darin Beckman, William Bergen, James Holliday to the Emergency Telephone Systems Board Update/Approval:** Motion by Donaldson and second by Young to appoint Darin Beckman, William Bergen, & James Holliday to the Emergency Telephone Systems Board. All in favor, motion carried.
2. **Dennis J. Uhrig to the Harvel #1 Drainage District to a three-year term from November 2025 through November 2028 to fill the seat vacated by John Richard Lyons Update/Approval:** Motion by Donaldson and second by Beck to appoint Dennis J. Uhrig to the Harvel #1 Drainage District to a three-year term from November 2025 through November 2028 to fill the seat vacated by John Richard Lyons. All in favor, motion carried.
3. **Joyce Matthews to the Montgomery County Housing Authority Update/Approval:** Motion by Donaldson and second by Whitworth to reappoint Joyce Matthews to the Montgomery County Housing Authority Board for a five-year term. All in favor, motion carried.

PAY BILLS AND PAYROLL: Motion by Corso and second by Hughes to pay all approved bills and payroll. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Voting yes: Beason, Beck, Bergen, Corso, Daniels, Donaldson, Hancock, Hughes, Jones, Murzynski, Ritchie, Ruppert, Whitworth, Young. All in favor, motion carried.

ADJOURN: The next regular full board meeting will be on Tuesday, December 9, 2025, at 5:30 p.m. in the County Board Room, Hillsboro, Illinois. Motion by Hughes and second by Murzynski to adjourn the Full Board Meeting. All in favor, motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 6:48 p.m. Minutes respectfully recorded and submitted by Montgomery County Clerk and Recorder Sandy Leitheiser.