

**Montgomery County Board Minutes**  
**For Tuesday, January 13, 2026 – 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 Tuesday, January 13, 2026. The meeting was called to order by County Board Chairman Doug Donaldson at 5:30 PM.

**Roll call:** 12 members present, 2 members absent.

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

**Members Absent:** Jeremy Jones, Patty Whitworth

**Pledge of Allegiance to the flag** was led by County Board member Russ Beason.

**Mileage and Per Diem Approval:** Claims for mileage and per diem were read by County Clerk Leitheiser. **Motion by Daniels and second by Hughes to approve the mileage and per diem.**

**ROLL CALL VOTE:** Voting yes: Beason, Beck, Bergen, Corso, Daniels, Donaldson, Hancock, Hughes, Murzynski, Ritchie, Ruppert, Young. **All in favor, motion carried.**

**Approval of Minutes of Previous County Board Meeting:** **Motion by Beck and second by Hughes to approve the minutes of the previous regular county board meeting held on Tuesday, December 9, 2025. All in favor, motion carried.**

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

1. **Animal Control Report** – Tricia Papin was present for questions and commended by Chairman Donaldson for finding homes for animals at the facility.
2. **Circuit Clerk’s Report** – Daniel Robbins was present for questions.
3. **Coroner’s Report** – Randy Leetham was present for questions.
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 present for questions.
10. **Probation Office Report** – Bane 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 present for questions.
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 not present.

**APPROVAL OF ITEMS ON THE CONSENT AGENDA:** **Motion by Beason and second by Corso to approve the items on the Consent Agenda. All in favor, motion carried.**

## **LIAISON REPORTS:**

- **CEFS Board** -- Beason referred to a hand-out on CEFS LIHEAP services, noting \$3.4 million in LIHEAP benefits paid in the seven counties served by CEFS.
- **708 Board** – Murzynski reported the board had met on Monday, Jan. 12, 2026 and discussed the building at 127 N. Main Street in Hillsboro.
- **ETSB / 911 Board** – Bergen had nothing to report.
- **Health Department** -- Whitworth was not present.
- **IL Association of County Officials** -- Hancock had nothing to report.
- **MCEDC** -- Daniels referred to Executive Director Kaitlyn Fath, who reported meeting with Jardogs in Hillsboro, working with National Primers, who will be creating \$50,000-\$75,000 per year jobs in Litchfield, working with Five Below, Marshall's, and TJ Maxx who are considering sites in Litchfield, and spoke about the local wellness trends in Montgomery County.
- **Planning Commission** -- Ritchie had nothing to report.
- **Senior Citizens Board** -- Daniels reported the new HVAC has been installed and stated its cost was funded by a DCEO grant.
- **UCCI** – Corso reported a meeting is set for Jan. 26, 2026.
- **U of I** – Ruppert reported a meeting was held recently in Hillsboro at which officers were elected.
- **WCDC** – Jones was not present.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** Bill Schroeder spoke regarding recent Development & Personnel Committee minutes referencing Pattern Energy as nearly complete with land acquisition. He said he would like to know how many acres the potential project encompassed and where they are located. He also inquired if sales tax is applied to methane extracted from under surface parcels in Montgomery County.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**COORDINATING COMMITTEE:** Given by County Board Chairman Doug Donaldson:

1. **Information Systems Report Update/Approval:** Donaldson said IS Director Curt Watkins was not present for the committee meeting due to illness.
2. **EMA/EPA Report Update/Approval:** Donaldson said Director Dan Hough reported replacing the battery in the EMA vehicle. He anticipates advertising for bids for a new EMA vehicle; three trade-ins should help defray costs. He also reported beginning work as 911 Coordinator on Dec. 1, 2025, and receiving back-dated EPA grant reimbursements for over \$70,000 that had been left pending prior to his tenure.
3. **Power Resource Adequacy Report Update/Approval:** Donaldson said the committee reviewed a summary of the new legally mandated report by the Illinois Power Agency, Illinois EPA, and Illinois Commerce Commission warning Ameren's territory is expected to see power shortages beginning in 2031 and escalating sharply through 2035 due to surging demand and power plant retirements.
4. **FOIA Employee Update/Approval:** The committee reviewed survey results from UCCI and will continue searching for possible solutions.
5. **MCSO Vehicle Bid Opening Update/Approval:** The committee reviewed the lone bid from Victory Lane Chrysler in Carlinville for two new Police Pursuit Dodge Durango vehicles. One bid was for \$39,062, including a \$6,000 trade-in; the other was for

\$34,587 with a \$9,000 trade-in. **Motion by Donaldson and second by Hancock to award the bid for \$73,649 for two new Police Pursuit Dodge Durango vehicles from Victory Lane Chrysler in Carlinville from Coal Fund 375. ROLL CALL VOTE:** Voting yes: Beason, Beck, Bergen, Corso, Daniels, Donaldson, Hancock, Hughes, Murzynski, Ritchie, Ruppert, Young. **All in favor, motion carried.**

**DEVELOPMENT & PERSONNEL COMMITTEE REPORT:** Given by Committee Chair Chad Ruppert:

1. **MCEDC Update/Approval:** Ruppert said MCEDC Executive Director Kaitlyn Fath reported she has been working with Ameren on a property inventory and her board has approved the use of Alpha Maps. She has also met with Jardogs and has been working on county tourism needs and cell service issues.
2. **Animal Control Update/Approval:** Ruppert said Animal Control Warden Tricia Papin reported to the committee three dogs and three cats were at the facility, which was empty before the Christmas holiday. The facility began operating with new Saturday hours in 2026. Eight municipal animal control contracts expired at the end of November 2025. Ruppert said the issue will be addressed at the Mayors Meeting set for 5 p.m. Wednesday, January 28, 2026 at 5 p.m. in the County Board room of the Historic Courthouse in Hillsboro.
3. **Enclosure, Eye Wash, and Fence Bids Update/Approval:** Ruppert stated the committee briefly reviewed three bids from one contractor and would like to see bids from at least one more. The item will remain on the agenda for next month.
4. **DCEO Energy Transition Grant Update/Approval:** Ruppert reported the Phase 3 application was submitted by the Dec. 19, 2025 deadline.
5. **Wind, Solar, and Battery Ordinances Update/Approval:** Ruppert said state legislation was signed by Gov. JB Pritzker on Jan. 8, 2026, requiring changes to county ordinances. The item will remain on the agenda.
6. **Montgomery First Community Engagement Update/Approval:** Ruppert reported the committee reviewed the proposed Community Benefits Agreement which includes a \$25,000 donation from Summit Ridge Energy to the SCI center in Litchfield. **Motion by Ruppert and second by Hughes to approve the Montgomery First Community Engagement Agreement with Summit Ridge Energy. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 23, pages 131-132).**
7. **County Starting Salary Update/Approval:** Ruppert said the item will remain on the agenda while job descriptions are gathered from department heads for potential salary classification by Bushue HR.
8. **Telecommunicators Local 1084 Grievance Review Update/Approval:** Ruppert said the committee reviewed information from Local 1084, the Montgomery County Sheriff, and Bushue HR regarding a recent grievance. Committee members expressed satisfaction with the decision made by the Sheriff, and this decision was relayed to Local 1084 in writing.
9. **Pattern Energy Update/Approval:** Ruppert said Pattern Energy representative Maggie Poteau reported to the committee virtually on behalf of Pattern Energy and stated land acquisition is nearly complete, and she anticipates the project will be moving into the permitting phase in early 2027. In response to a public comment earlier in the meeting, Ruppert noted the developer is under no obligation to reveal details before submitting a

siting application, but he understands the project will be proposed for the northern and eastern parts of the county.

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

1. **2026 Township MFT Rock Letting Update/Approval:** Murzynski said the committee reviewed the bids for 2026 township MFT rock letting. **Motion by Ritchie and second by Hughes to award the low bids as presented. All in favor, motion carried (Murzynski abstained).**
2. **2026 County MFT Rock Letting Update/Approval:** Murzynski said the committee also reviewed the bids for 2026 county MFT rock letting. **Motion by Murzynski and second by Ruppert to award the low bids as presented. All in favor, motion carried.**
3. **Section 20-00144-00-FP – Walshville Trail Road Improvement Update/Approval:** Murzynski reported Engineer Greenwood received a preliminary engineering agreement for improvements on Walshville Trail, noting he will soon send recommendations for revisions. Greenwood hopes the final draft will be submitted by the end of February with construction starting in 2027 or 2028.
4. **Nokomis Rd. (CH 7) Extension/Improvement 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 and improving the road to Route 16 to divert truck traffic from city streets.
5. **Section 23-05122-00-PV – Fillmore Township E. 24<sup>th</sup> Road Improvement Project – Engineering Agreement Update/Approval:** Murzynski reported Fillmore Consolidated Township received funding to improve Township East 24<sup>th</sup> Road, which routinely floods as it runs along a creek bottom. Engineer Greenwood reviewed the preliminary engineering agreement from Hurst-Rosche to raise the road bed. **Motion by Murzynski and second by Young to approve a preliminary engineering and construction engineering agreement with Hurst-Rosche for \$25,000 for East 24<sup>th</sup> Road improvements in Fillmore Consolidated Township. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 23, pages 133-142).**
6. **Highway Department Site Development Engineering Agreement– Update/Approval:** Engineer Greenwood reported plans to conduct a boundary and topographic survey and civil engineering services to support the safe transfer of the County Highway Department’s mineral storage deposits to the western side of the site, clearing the eastern half of the site for the new EMA storage area soon to be constructed in the old Wright building, as well as for any future expansion of the Montgomery County Health Department.
7. **Resolution 2026-02, Equipment Purchase with Highway Funds Update/Approval:** Murzynski introduced Resolution 2026-02 to purchase a 2027 Western Star 47X Tandem Dump Truck with snow plow and tailgate spreader for an amount not to exceed \$315,000 to replace the highway department’s oldest truck, a 2003 International. **Motion by Murzynski and second by Bergen to approve Resolution 2026-02, Equipment Purchase with Highway Funds not to exceed \$315,000. ROLL CALL VOTE:** Voting yes: Beason, Beck, Bergen, Corso, Daniels, Donaldson, Hancock, Hughes, Murzynski, Ritchie, Ruppert, Young. **All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 23, page 143).**

8. **Resolution 2026-03, Equipment Purchase with Coal Funds Update/Approval:** Murzynski said the committee recommended a second tandem dump truck from Coal Fund 375; but after discussion at the Finance & Budget Committee the following day, the committee will discuss it again in February.
9. **Heavy Equipment Shed Update/Approval:** Murzynski reported Engineer Greenwood and Roads & Bridges Committee member Ruppert joined him in walking through the new building to develop a punch list of jobs needing completed before the final payment is issued to the contractor. In response to a question from board member Hughes, Murzynski reported a roof leak has been fixed. Greenwood stated he is holding back the final 10% of the project's payment until all jobs have been completed.

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

1. **SOA Office Update/Approval:** Ritchie said the committee reviewed the reports from the Supervisor of Assessments, GIS office, and Property Evaluation & Tax Advisors (PETA) consultants. Chairman Donaldson congratulated the SOA office on the work they have done.
2. **Capital Improvement & Coal Fund Reports Update/Approval:** Ritchie reported a November 2025 coal royalty payment of \$139,502.14, bringing the total coal royalties for FY2025 to \$1,793,822.50.
3. **Montgomery County Fair Board Request Update/Approval:** Montgomery County Fair Board representative Bev Seamon was present, along with Fair Board members Marti Benning and LeEllen Watson, to request funds for needed electrical upgrades at the county fairgrounds. Seamon said electrical service at the fairgrounds is in substandard shape and required the use of several EMA generators during the 2025 county fair. After learning the Fair Board was ineligible for DCEO grant funds, they have begun several fundraisers including a gun raffle, have inquired into Ameren grants, and requested assistance from the Montgomery County Farm Bureau. Fair Board members said fundraising is not likely to raise what is needed in time to complete the work before this year's fair, which is scheduled for June 24-28, 2026. Ritchie said the Finance & Budget Committee recommended a donation of \$30,000. **Motion by Ritchie and second by Young to make a donation of \$30,000 from Coal Fund 375 to the Montgomery County Fair Board for electrical work. All in favor, motion carried.**
4. **2026 IRS Mileage Rate Update/Approval:** Ritchie said the committee reviewed the 2026 IRS business standard mileage rate of 72.5 cents per mile. **Motion by Ritchie and second by Beck to increase the Montgomery County mileage reimbursement rate to 72.5 cents per mile beginning Wednesday, January 14, 2026. All in favor, motion carried.**
5. **Fund 375 Purchases Update/Approval:** Ritchie reported the committee discussed seven requests for payments from Fund 375, including three from the Sheriff's office, one from the Treasurer's office, one from Animal Control, one from the Highway Department, and one from the County Board for the Supervisor of Assessments office. The committee needed more information on the Animal Control request for \$9,000 in coal funds for a used Chevy Tahoe from the Sheriff's office, and was not inclined to approve a \$300,000 request for a second new truck for the Highway Department. **Motion by Ritchie and second by Daniels to spend from Coal Fund 375: \$7,936.68 to**

Power DMS for the Sheriff's office subscription. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Ritchie and second by Hancock to spend from Coal Fund 375: \$24,868.71 to Motorola Solutions for the Sheriff's office body cam storage. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Ritchie and second by Daniels to spend from Coal Fund 375: \$9,891 to GTSi for Sheriff's office squad car equipment. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Ritchie and second by Murzynski to spend from Coal Fund 375: \$4,149 to Tom Day for a refurbished copier in the Treasurer's office. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Ritchie and second by Ruppert to spend from Coal Fund 375: \$14,583 to Property Evaluation & Tax Advisors for SOA consultant contract. All in favor, motion carried.

6. **Transfer Two Coal Rights Parcels from Trustee Sale Update/Approval:** The committee reviewed documentation for the two parcels and recommended the transfers. Motion by Ritchie and second by Beck to transfer coal rights parcel 01-04-400-301 in Bois D'Arc Township to Duane Davis. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Ritchie and second by Beck to transfer coal rights parcel 02-20-100-301 in Bois D'Arc Township to Alexander Development and Leasing Company LLC. All in favor, motion carried. (For copies, see Resolution Book 23, pages 144-145).
7. **Elected Official Salary Process Update/Approval:** Ritchie said the committee discussed setting salaries for county elected officials based off a percentage of the Sheriff's salary, which is a percentage of the State's Attorney salary. Salaries must be set at least 180 days before the beginning of the term of office. The committee will continue the discussion next month when Circuit Clerk Daniel Robbins is present with details.

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

1. **Maintenance Report Update/Approval:** Hughes noted 67 items on Maintenance Director Phil Ernst's report, including 56 work orders completed in December.
2. **DCEO County Board Room Grant Update/Approval:** Hughes reported the committee reviewed two proposals from Cinric Painting: one for \$10,750 to re-stain and refinish the historic woodwork, handrails, judge's bench and decorative moldings in the County Board room, and the other for \$7,600 to paint them. He said the committee expressed an interest in staining rather than painting. The County Board has already committed \$4,023.85 of the \$10,000 DCEO grant to seat cushions, leaving \$5,976.15 available. Hughes asked Circuit Clerk Robbins to check with the Resident Judge for funds to cover the nearly \$5,000 cost above grant funding, and Robbins reported Judge Hantla had pledged \$3,000.
3. **County Farm Lease Update/Approval:** Hughes said bids will be opened at next month's meeting, and those present will have the opportunity to increase their bids.
4. **Surplus Kohler Generator Update/Approval:** Hughes reported the former generator at the Courthouse Complex has been transported to the EMA building at the Highway Department for possible use there.
5. **127 N. Main Street Property Update/Approval:** Hughes explained County Board Administrators office staff had contacted the listing real estate agent to show the property to the committee last week, not knowing he had been in contact with a different real estate agent regarding the property; and he requested the State's Attorney to affirm he had done nothing inappropriate. Hughes then paused his report for three minutes to

privately discuss with State's Attorney Shaw and Assistant State's Attorney Bellm whether a closed session was needed to discuss a potential property purchase. **Motion by Murzynski and second by Beason to enter closed session at 6:28 p.m. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Ritchie and second by Beason to return to open session at 7:11 p.m. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Hughes and second by Hancock to refer the property at 127 N. Main Street in Hillsboro to the Buildings & Grounds Committee for possible action. All in favor, motion carried.**

**APPROVAL OF THE COMMITTEE REPORTS & MINUTES:** Motion by Murzynski and second by Beck to approve the committee reports and minutes. All in favor, motion carried.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS & SCHEDULE CHANGES:**

1. A Rules of Order Ad Hoc Committee meeting has been set for Thursday, Jan. 22, 2026, at 4 p.m. in the County Board Room at the Historic Courthouse in Hillsboro.
2. A Mayors' Meeting has been set for Wednesday, Jan. 28, 2026, at 5 p.m. in the County Board Room at the Historic Courthouse in Hillsboro.

**APPOINTMENTS:**

1. **Heather Hampton+Knodle to the Central Illinois Economic Development Authority Update/Approval:** Motion by Donaldson and second by Young to reappoint Heather Hampton+Knodle for a six-year term to the Central Illinois Economic Development Authority. All in favor, motion carried.

**PAY BILLS AND PAYROLL:** Motion by Hughes and second by Beason 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, February 10, 2026 at 5:30 p.m. in the County Board Room, Hillsboro, Illinois. Motion by Young and second by Ruppert to adjourn the Full Board Meeting. All in favor, motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 7:14 p.m. Minutes respectfully recorded and submitted by Montgomery County Clerk and Recorder Sandy Leitheiser.