Montgomery County Board Minutes
For Tuesday, October 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, October 13, 2026. The meeting was called to order by County Board Chairman Doug Donaldson at 5:30 p.m.

Roll call was taken – 12 members present, 2 members absent.

Members Present: Russell Beason, Connie Beck, Rob Corso, Chris Daniels, Doug Donaldson, Cody Gudgel, Keith Hancock, Mark Hughes, Jeremy Jones, Ethan Murzynski, Chad Ruppert, Roy Schieferdecker **Members Absent:** Patty Whitworth, Evan Young

Pledge of Allegiance to the flag was led by County Board Member Russell Beason.

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

Approval of Minutes of Previous County Board Meeting: Motion by Beason and second by Murzynski to approve the minutes of the previous regular County Board meeting held on Tuesday, September 8, 2026. 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 and added early voting and vote-by-mail has been brisk. She encouraged all to vote at the upcoming November 3, 2026 General Election.
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 –** Banee Ulrici was not present.
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. Chairman Donaldson acknowledged SOA Chief Deputy Michaela Gray for earning her CIAO certification.
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 Beck and second by Schieferdecker 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 many funding requests will go unfulfilled due to lack of funds.
- **ETSB / 911 Board –** Hancock had nothing to report.
- **Health Department –-** Whitworth was not present.
- **IL Association of County Officials –-** Hancock had nothing to report.
- **MCEDC –-** Gudgel had nothing to report.
- **Senior Citizens Board –-** Daniels reported the board is reviewing a new Memorandum of Understanding with CEFS for 30 days.
- **UCCI –** Corso reported hearing a Bellwether budget presentation.
- **U of I –** Ruppert reported the next meeting set for Thursday, Oct. 15, 2026, at 7 p.m.
- **WCDC –** Jones had nothing to report.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

COORDINATING COMMITTEE: Given by County Board Chairman Doug Donaldson:

1. **EMA/EPA Report Update/Approval**: Donaldson reported a busy month of training for Director Dan Hough, including a class he instructed at HSHS St. Francis in Litchfield. He is planning further classes for the first quarter of 2027. Hough reported the Hazmat team was deployed twice in Macoupin County during the past month, the landfill is considering a vertical expansion, and IEMA has requested a mutual aid intergovernmental service agreement. Donaldson also thanked MABAS 56 for the Hazmat truck display before the meeting and he called the vehicle a good investment.
2. **Resolution to Participate in IEMA Mutual Aid System Update/Approval: Motion by Donaldson and second by Murzynski to approve the resolution authorizing participation as a member in the IEMA Mutual Aid System Response. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 24, page 71).**
3. **Planning Commission Appointments Update/Approval:** Chairman Donaldson said the committee reviewed five commissioners to be appointed in December. He stated two commissioner positions remain available.
4. **Zoning Consideration Update/Approval**: Donaldson said in his opinion, the county needs to begin serious conversations about zoning and stated an Illinois Farm Bureau representative is willing to address the board on the issue.

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

1. **Geronimo Power Donnellson Solar Project Update/Approval**: Ruppert reported Lead Project Developer Leanne Russell Fate gave the committee an initial overview of a potential 195 MW utility scale solar project that would straddle the Bond and Montgomery County line near Donnellson. She anticipates a 3000 acre footprint with a

permit application submitted late summer or early fall 2027. Board member Jones added the project would be the second-largest solar array in the state, and County Clerk Leitheiser reported the company has filed their list of land agent names in her office.

2. **Animal Control Update/Approval:** Ruppert reported Animal Control responded to 42 calls in the past month and has three pet adoption events scheduled for October. He added there are 69 animals on the foster list.
3. **MCEDC Update/Approval**: Ruppert summarized MCEDC Executive Director Kaitlyn Fath's report, noting she attended 23 meetings during the past month, as well as provided updates on her program of work including housing, community and business education, cellular service, CEO, and COAD.
4. **BEAD Update/Approval**: Ruppert said the County was notified federal Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Grant (BEAD) funding has been approved, and the committee reviewed maps of addresses to be served. Interactive maps are available at https://www.illinoisbead.org/#/.
5. **Wind & Solar Ordinance Update/Approval**: Ruppert said the committee reviewed pending ordinances, as well as "Visual Impact Assessment" studies now required by Ohio legislation. He stated County Board Administrator Mike Plunkett has forwarded the Ohio legislation to Attorney Andrew Keyt for possible inclusion in Montgomery County ordinances.
6. **DCEO Energy Transition Grant Update/Approval**: Ruppert noted the final Round 1 report was submitted on Monday, Oct. 5, as well as the quarterly Round 2 report. He said Plunkett has also submitted additional information required for Round 3, but unfortunately that grant agreement remains pending at the DCEO level. The County will seek input from the Governor's office.
7. **Union Negotiation Update/Approval**: Ruppert reported a special meeting for negotiations has been set for 5 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 15, 2026 in the County Board Room.
8. **Pattern Energy Update/Approval**: Ruppert reported a new land agent list with two new names was filed in the County Clerk's office.
9. **2027 County Holiday Schedule Update/Approval:** Ruppert described a tentative holiday schedule for 2027 with the same total number of holidays (14) as 2026. He said two holidays have been eliminated: Election Day and a second Christmas holiday since Christmas falls on a weekend. Subsequently, two holidays have been added: Juneteenth and New Year's Eve since New Year's Day falls on a weekend. **Motion by Ruppert and second by Daniels to approve the 2027 County Holiday Schedule. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 24, page 72).**
10. **Hope Trust Update/Approval**: Ruppert reported open enrollment is going well, and the committee recommended a Joint Self-Insurance Risk Pool Participation Agreement to join Hope Trust for employee health insurance. **Motion by Ruppert and second by Hughes to approve the JSIRP Participation Agreement. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 24, pages 73-74).**
11. **Elm Lawn Solar Update/Approval**: Noting the ESA Project Developer Luis Gonazlez was present at the County Board meeting, Ruppert reviewed the Oct. 1 hearing outcome. The committee recommended six conditions for siting approval: 1) The developer shall provide detailed construction drawings for review by the relevant authorities no less than two months prior to the commencement of construction of the solar project; 2) The developer shall provide the name and contact information of the designated construction

liaison once the Engineering, Procurement, and Construction (EPC) team or construction team has been on-boarded by the developer; 3) The developer shall provide the name and contact information of the contracted Operations and Maintenance (O&M) company once the company has been contracted by the developer; 4) Access to the facility will be designed and maintained to minimize impact on adjacent properties. The developer will provide a copy of the Shared Road Use Agreement with the North Litchfield Township Road District prior to the commencement of construction of the solar project; 5) The Developer shall maintain commercial general liability insurance coverage for the Solar Facility, with limits of not less than $2,000,000 per occurrence and $5,000,000 in the aggregate, throughout construction and operation. Within thirty (30) days of a written request from the County, the Developer shall provide the County with a current certificate of insurance, or a copy of the applicable policy declarations, evidencing such coverage; and 6) The Developer shall maintain the vegetative buffer shown on Preliminary Site Plan Sheet L101 throughout operation of the Solar Facility. Dead plant material shall be removed and replaced no later than the close of the first full planting season following its identification. **Motion by Ruppert and second by Beck to approve the Elm Lawn Solar siting permit with six attached conditions. All in favor, motion carried.**

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

1. **Maintenance Vehicle Bid Opening Update/Approval: Motion by Hughes and second by Jones to accept the bid of $49,777 plus $550 for a maintenance vehicle with spray-in bed liner less trade-in from Steve Schmitt of Litchfield. All in favor, motion carried.**
2. **County Farm Cemetery Clean-Up Update/Approval**: **Motion by Hughes and second by Beason to approve the "Permission to Clean and Preserve a Historic Illinois Cemetery" for Seth Yount to clean up the County Farm Cemetery. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 24, page 75).**
3. **Maintenance Report Update/Approval**: Committee Chair Hughes noted 67 items on Maintenance Director Phil Ernst's report, including completing 44 work orders last month.

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

1. **Resolution 2026-10 appropriating funds for the payment of the County Engineer's Salary for FY27 Update/Approval**: Committee Chair Murzynski described a request from the Illinois Association of County Engineers asking the state increase the County Engineers Salary Program 8.5% for 2027, and a request by Engineer Cody Greenwood for a 10% increase which would place his salary 8% above the state required minimum of $140,100. Development & Personnel Committee Chair Ruppert said a 9.25% increase would be tough to justify to union employees. Murzynski said the increase would place the Engineer's salary comparable to other similarly-sized counties, and Board member Hancock pointed out other counties are paying $30,000 signing bonuses to attract qualified engineers. **Motion by Murzynski and second by Hancock to set the FY2027 County Engineer salary at $150,765 for a 9.25% increase. ROLL CALL VOTE:** Voting yes: Beason, Beck, Corso, Daniels, Donaldson, Gudgel, Hancock, Hughes, Jones,

Murzynski, Schieferdecker**.** Voting no: Ruppert. **Motion carried 11-1. (For copy, see Resolution Book 24, pages 76-77).**

FINANCE & BUDGET COMMITTEE REPORT: Given by Committee Chair Connie Beck:

1. **SOA Office Update/Approval**: Beck highlighted the report, noting Chief Deputy Michaela Gray had passed all of her IPAI courses and as of Friday, Oct. 2, 2026 she is a Certified Illinois Assessing Officer (CIAO).
2. **Capital Improvement & Coal Fund Reports Update/Approval**: Beck reported a $220,327.94 August coal royalty payment and a total Coal Fund balance of $11.2 million.
3. **FY2027 Budget Update/Approval**: Beck said the committee had relatively few FY2027 budget changes to discuss. The committee discussed but made no change to the State's Attorney's budget regarding the Victim/Witness Coordinator; added $1,580 to the Supervisor of Assessments' staff salary line item; changed the Fund 375 line item for Sheriff's vehicles from $180,000 to $185,000; and added $125,000 to the Coordinated Services Wind Permit Application revenue line item and $90,000 to the Wind Permit expense line item. Beck stated Treasurer Nikki Lohman will make changes in the Employee Health Insurance line items when open enrollment is complete and in the Property/Liability and Work Comp line items after bid opening on Oct. 14. The budget will remain on public display until final action at the Nov. 10, 2026 County Board meeting.
4. **FY2027 Tax Levy Update/Approval**: **Motion by Beck and second by Murzynski to approve the FY2027 Montgomery County Tax Levy of $6,580,750 for an increase of 4.9909%. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Beck and second by Daniels to approve the FY2027 Hillsboro Area Ambulance Service Tax Levy of $312,000 for an increase of 3.9994%. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Beck and second by Jones to approve the FY2027 Raymond-Harvel Area Ambulance Service Tax Levy of $141,000 for a decrease of 5.3691%. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Beck and second by Jones to approve the FY2027 Farmersville-Waggoner Area Ambulance Service Tax Levy of $125,600 for an increase of 4.9244%. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Beck and second by Hancock to approve the FY2027 Nokomis-Witt Area Ambulance Service Tax Levy of $438,943 for an increase of 4.9998%. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Beck and second by Ruppert to approve the FY2027 Extension Service Tax Levy of $157,000 for a decrease of 0.0293%. All in favor, motion carried. (For copies, see Resolution Book 24, pages 78-83).**
5. **Travel Voucher Roll Call Update/Approval**: The committee reviewed and recommended an overnight travel voucher from the VAC superintendent exceeding the GSA by $38 per night which requires County Board approval by roll call vote. **Motion by Beck and second by Jones to pay the VAC travel voucher of $638.34. ROLL CALL VOTE:** Voting yes: Beason, Beck, Corso, Daniels, Donaldson, Gudgel, Hancock, Hughes, Jones, Murzynski, Ruppert, Schieferdecker**. All in favor, motion carried.**
6. **Fund 375 Purchases Update/Approval**: Beck reported the committee reviewed and recommended Coal Fund 375 vouchers, as well as a request from Maintenance Director Phil Ernst for up to $10,000 to replace a back-flow preventer. **Motion by Beck and second by Hughes to approve payment of Fund 375 vouchers to Cinric Painting for**

$17,900; Ace Hardware for $29.99 and $29.33; Steve Schmitt of Litchfield for $50,255; Hillsboro Electric for $3,050.58; and permission for Maintenance to spend up to $10,000 to replace a back-flow preventer. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Voting yes: Beason, Beck, Corso, Daniels, Donaldson, Gudgel, Hancock, Hughes, Jones, Murzynski, Ruppert, Schieferdecker**. All in favor, motion carried.**

7. **Trustee Sale Property Transfers Update/Approval**: The committee reviewed and recommended 10 parcels sold at the Trustee Sale be transferred by the County Board. **Motion by Beck and second by Hancock to transfer parcel 08-23-158-011 in Nokomis Township to Hillsboro Area Hospital, Inc. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Beck and second by Hughes to transfer parcel 08-23-158-015 in Nokomis Township to the City of Nokomis. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Beck and second by Schieferdecker to transfer parcel 09-05-231-004 in Audubon Township to Steven R. Morgason. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Beck and second by Murzynski to transfer parcel 12-22-404-007 in Irving Township to Big Bay 4 LLC. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Beck and second by Daniels to transfer parcel 12-22-456-014 in Irving Township to Joanna Szuba. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Beck and second by Gudgel to transfer parcel 12-22-488-004 in Irving Township to Tom Murphy and Lori Murphy. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Beck and second by Ruppert to transfer parcel 13-06-179-001 in Witt Township to James VanOstran. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Beck and second by Ruppert to transfer parcel 13-06-253-002 in Witt Township to Michael Golitko and Elizabeth Golitko. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Beck and second by Gudgel to transfer parcel 15-04-134-006 in South Litchfield Township to Robert Plowman Jr. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Beck and second by Corso to transfer parcel 21-19-362-002 in East Fork Township to the Randy & Judy Stewart Living Trust. All in favor, motion carried. (For copies, see Resolution Book 24, pages 84-103).**

APPROVAL OF THE COMMITTEE REPORTS & MINUTES:

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS & SCHEDULE CHANGES:

1. Bushue HR will conduct a bid opening for property/liability and work comp insurance at 2 p.m. Wednesday, October 14, in the County Board Room.
2. The Development & Personnel Committee has set a special meeting for 5 p.m. Thursday, October 15, 2026 in the County Board Room for union negotiations.

APPOINTMENTS: Motion by Donaldson and second by Beck to appoint Charles Mike James to the Montgomery County Housing Authority to fill the unexpired term of Tonya Flannery through June 30, 2029. All in favor, motion carried.

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

<u>RECESS:</u> The next regular full board meeting will be on Tuesday, November 10, 2026 at 5:30 p.m. in the County Board Room, Hillsboro, Illinois. Motion by Beason and second by Murzynski to recess the Full Board Meeting. All in favor, motion carried.

Meeting recessed at 6:25 p.m. Minutes respectfully recorded and submitted by Montgomery County Clerk and Recorder Sandy Leitheiser.