

Montgomery County Board Minutes For Tuesday, December 9, 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 Tuesday, December 9, 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 board member Evan Young.

Mileage and Per Diem Approval: Claims for mileage and per diem were read by County Clerk Leitheiser. **Motion by Hughes and second by Corso 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 Whitworth and second by Bergen to approve the minutes of the previous regular county board meeting held on Wednesday, November 12, 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 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 and added the last day to file a complaint with the Board of Review is Jan. 5, 2026.
15. **State's Attorney Report** – Brian Shaw was present for questions and added he will introduce a new Assistant State's Attorney at the next meeting.
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 Hughes and second by Ritchie 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 had nothing to report.
- **ETSB / 911 Board** — Bergen congratulated Ed Boyd on his recent retirement.
- **Health Department** — Whitworth had nothing to report.
- **IL Association of County Officials** — Hancock had nothing to report.
- **MCEDC** — Daniels reported MCEDC Executive Director Fath was present and provided members copies of the corporation's FY2026 budget and other material.
- **Planning Commission** — Ritchie had nothing to report.
- **Senior Citizens Board** — Daniels reported much of the DCEO grant work had been completed.
- **UCCI** — Corso had nothing to report.
- **U of I** — Ruppert had nothing to report.
- **WCDC** — Jones reported learning at a Nov. 20 meeting the organization is meeting its goals.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

COORDINATING COMMITTEE: Given by County Board Chairman Doug Donaldson:

1. **Information Systems Report Update/Approval:** Donaldson noted IS Director Curt Watkins reported responding to a power outage the day of the committee meeting, prohibiting him from compiling a report. He reported Watkins said he is proud of the work his department has accomplished in the past 15 years, during which time the department has grown beyond expectations.
2. **EMA/EPA Report Update/Approval:** EMA/EPA Director Hough described a hazardous material emergency plan grant agreement.
3. **Ad Hoc Committee to Address SB3455 Wooded Acreage Assessments Update/Approval:** Donaldson reported the committee provided five recommendations for the study to evaluate the property tax system required by Public Act 103-1002, and Committee Chairman Beason read the recommendations:
 - *Regarding the local and state appeal process, the Ad Hoc Committee recommends legal notice publication of the process is included with the required annual assessment change publication and quadrennial publication.*
 - *Because variability in assessments hampers economic development, the Ad Hoc Committee recommends a statewide assessment process that is less reliant on market values.*
 - *Because in rural areas increases in assessed value are usually driven more by market values rather than economic development, the Ad Hoc Committee recommends required Truth in Taxation*

public hearings when the percentage levy increase exceeds the percentage of assessed value increase from new construction.

- *The State of Illinois should reexamine the requirements for units of local government to extend and increase debt ceilings.*
- *The State of Illinois should statutorily lessen the reliance of education funding on local property tax levies.*

He reported the committee had been very productive, and he was honored to have chaired it. Donaldson added positive outcomes can occur when government and members of the public work together. **Motion by Beason and second by Young to make five recommendations to the State of Illinois for the study to evaluate the property tax system as required by Public Act 103-1002. All in favor, motion carried.**

4. **Mayor's Meeting Date Update/Approval:** Donaldson reminded the board a Mayor's Meeting has been tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, Jan. 28, 2026, at 5:00 PM in the County Board room of the Historic Courthouse.

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

1. **Animal Control Update/Approval:** Ruppert said Animal Control Warden Tricia Papin reported to the committee 11 dogs, 2 pups, 4 cats, and 6 kittens at the facility. He said she and her staff responded to 25 calls in November. He said the committee reviewed and discussed two estimates for DCEO grant work at the facility and asked the Animal Control Warden to solicit three separate proposals: one for the enclosure, one for the eye-wash station, and one for fencing.
2. **Circuit Clerk Local 148 Contract Update/Approval:** Ruppert said the committee reviewed the signed four-year contract negotiated by the Circuit Clerk with Circuit Clerk employees, calling for wage increases of 5.5% in FY2026, 5% in FY2027, 5% in FY2028, and 5% in FY2029, along with an entry level salary of \$17/hour. **Motion by Ruppert and second by Jones to approve the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Circuit Clerk of Montgomery County and the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 148, effective Dec. 1, 2025, through Nov. 30, 2029. All in favor, motion carried.**
3. **SOA Local 1084 Contract Update/Approval:** Ruppert said the committee discussed salary and starting wage issues for a three-year contract with Union Local 1084 representatives Matt Blankenship and Mike Young. He said the union discussed the county offer with members and agreed to a three-year contract calling for wage increases of 5.5% in FY2026, 5% in FY2027, and 5% in FY2028, along with an entry level salary of \$16.88/hour in FY2026, \$17.50/hour in FY2027, and \$18/hour in FY2028. **Motion by Ruppert and second by Daniels to approve the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Montgomery County and the Laborers' International Union of North America Local #1084, effective Dec. 1, 2025, through Nov. 30, 2028. All in favor, motion carried.**
4. **DCEO Energy Transition Grant Update/Approval:** Ruppert reported the committee reviewed and discussed items to be included on the Award #3 DCEO Energy Transition Grant totaling the award amount of \$1,092,450.34. Dan Rogers of First Due Consulting will have the grant application completed by the Dec. 19 deadline.

5. **Energy Omnibus Legislation Update/Approval:** Ruppert said state legislation recently passed requiring changes in the county wind and solar ordinances and also laying the framework for battery storage regulation and assessment.
6. **Montgomery First Community Engagement Update/Approval:** Ruppert reported the committee has an agreement in principle with Summit Ridge, but would like to wait until the developer or contractor has made contact with local labor before signing an agreement.
7. **County Starting Salary Update/Approval:** Ruppert said the committee reviewed starting salary language suggested by Bushue HR to institute pay grades for county positions. The committee will continue to work on the proposal.
8. **Training Reimbursement Policy Update/Approval:** Ruppert reported the committee reviewed a Training Repayment Agreement policy drafted by Bushue HR requiring employees to reimburse for county out-of-pocket training expenses if the employee resigns before completing three years of employment. **Motion by Ruppert and second by Ritchie to approve the Montgomery County Training Repayment Agreement. All in favor, motion carried.** (For copy, see Resolution Book 23, page 115).
9. **Hurst-Rosche Proposal to Review Montgomery County Solar Update/Approval:** The committee discussed a proposal from Hurst-Rosche for review of construction documents for Montgomery County Solar on Route 16 east of Litchfield for a not-to-exceed fee of \$3,500. **Motion by Ruppert and second by Beason to approve the agreement with Hurst-Rosche to review construction documents for Montgomery County Solar for a not-to-exceed fee of \$3,500.** All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 23, pages 116-117).

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

1. **Maintenance Report Update/Approval:** Hughes reported Maintenance Director Phil Ernst reviewed the 49 items on his report, including Bondurant Plumbing replacing a broken drainage pipe on the west side of the Historic Courthouse. This should relieve the continuous flooding in the County Clerk's record storage in the basement of the Historic Courthouse. Ellinger Window Cleaners finished cleaning the windows of the Courthouse Complex. Central Roofing repaired the gutters on the roof of Historic Court House's porch.
2. **DCEO County Board Room Grant Update/Approval:** Hughes said the committee reviewed Double E Upholstery's quote of \$4,023.85 to fabricate cushions for the bench style seating in the back of the County Board Room, to be paid from the DCEO grant. **Motion by Hughes and second by Beck to award Double E Upholstery's quote of \$4,023.85 to fabricate cushions for the bench style seating in the back of the County Board Room. All in favor, motion carried.**
3. **County Farm Lease Update/Approval:** Hughes said the committee is advertising for a new three-year lease for the County Farm and will open bids at the Buildings and Grounds Committee meeting at 8:30 a.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 3, 2025.
4. **127 N. Main Street Property Update/Approval:** Hughes reported 127 North Main Street, currently RehabEdge, was recently listed for sale on the market. Chief Probation Officer Banee Ulrici and Circuit Clerk Daniel Robbins are researching potential county

use for the building and will develop a proposal. If feasible, the committee may wish to walk through the building next month.

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

1. **Irresponsible Contractor on Township Bridge Projects Update/Approval:** Murzynski said the committee reviewed a list of past and continuing issues observed with a contractor currently working on three bridges affecting project performance, compliance, and overall trust.
2. **Resolution 2026-01, 2026 County MFT Resolution Update/Approval:** Murzynski said the committee reviewed and recommended the resolution appropriating \$1.2 million in County Motor Fuel Tax, the same amount as last year. **Motion by Murzynski and second by Ruppert to recommend approval of the 2026 County Motor Fuel Tax Resolution 2026-01 for \$1.2 million. 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. (For copy, see Resolution Book 23, pages 118-120).**
3. **Nokomis Rd. (CH 7) Extension Project Update/Approval:** Murzynski said the committee continued to discuss the possibility of improving the road to Route 16 to divert truck traffic from city streets. In hopes of receiving grant funding from the state, the committee agreed to move forward with a proposal from an engineering firm to increase the capacity of the road to present at next month's committee and full board meetings.
4. **Vacating Streets and Alleys in Zanesville Update/Approval:** Murzynski reported the committee reviewed the approved petition showing the vacated streets of Zanesville. Greenwood sent the petition to the State's Attorney for final review. **Motion by Murzynski and second by Corso to approve the Petition to Vacate Streets and Alleys in Zanesville on the contingency the States Attorney has no objections to the petition. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 23, pages 121-127).**
5. **Heavy Equipment Shed Update/Approval:** Murzynski said Engineer Greenwood hopes to finalize a punch list of jobs needing to be completed.
6. **Section 23-05122-00-PV – Fillmore Consolidated Township E. 24th Road Improvement Project – Preliminary Engineering Agreement Update/Approval:** Murzynski reported Fillmore Consolidated Township received Rebuild Illinois funding to improve Township East 24th Road, which routinely floods as it runs along a creek bottom. Engineer Greenwood will have an engineering agreement ready for review next month.

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

1. **SOA Office Update/Approval:** Ritchie told members Supervisor of Assessments Tysha Mullen reported her office is caught up on the 2025 payable 2026 tax cycle; assessment change notices were published and mailed on Dec. 4, 2025; a Township Assessor meeting had been scheduled for Dec. 15, 2025; and a Board of Review meeting has been scheduled for Jan. 9, 2026. She also informed the committee she has promoted Michaela Gray to the Chief Deputy position in the Supervisor of Assessments office.

2. **Capital Improvement & Coal Fund Reports Update/Approval:** Ritchie noted an October coal royalty payment of \$188,383.16 and a total Coal Fund balance of \$10,778,950.36.
3. **2026 IRS Mileage Rate Update/Approval:** Ritchie reported the new IRS mileage rate had not been published by meeting time.
4. **Pre-Approved Payment List Update/Approval:** Ritchie said County Clerk Sandy Leitheiser presented the committee with the results of her requested review of the Pre-Approved Payment List, with 12 items suggested for removal for non-use, and the addition of several notes of explanation. **Motion by Ritchie and second by Whitworth to approve changes to the Pre-Approved Payment List. All in favor, motion carried.** (For copy, see Resolution Book 23, pages 128-129).
5. **Coal Fund Voucher Process Update/Approval:** Ritchie said the committee discussed the issue created when Department Heads vouchers money from Coal Fund 375 in the final week of FY2025. All Coal Fund vouchers used to go through the Finance & Budget Committee, and the committee expressed a desire to return to the previous procedure. The committee also discussed establishing a procedure for Department Heads and Office Holders to request budgeted expenses from Coal Fund 375, and County Clerk Leitheiser suggested including the procedure to the County Board Rules of Order for better clarity. Chairman Donaldson said the next Rules of Order Committee meeting to establish this procedure will likely occur in January 2026. **Motion by Ritchie and second by Young to require all Coal Fund 375 requests to be approved by the Finance & Budget Committee and vouchers presented for payment before the committee's November meeting. All in favor, motion carried.** **Motion by Ritchie and second by Daniels to recommend a Coal Fund 375 expense procedure be established in the Montgomery County Board Rules of Order. All in favor, motion carried.**
6. **PTAX-451 Form for Supervisor of Assessments Update/Approval:** Ritchie reported a PTAX-451 form needing approved by the County Board for partial reimbursement of the Supervisor of Assessments' salary. **Motion by Ritchie and second by Beck to approve the PTAX-451 form for partial reimbursement of the Supervisor of Assessments salary. All in favor, motion carried.** (For copy, see Resolution Book 23, page 130).

APPROVAL OF THE COMMITTEE REPORTS & MINUTES:

Motion by Hughes and second by Hancock 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, Dec. 11, 2025, at 1:00 PM in the County Board Room of the Historic Courthouse.
2. Hillsboro Health Therapy Services has invited the board to a ribbon cutting on Friday, Dec. 12, 2025, at 4:15 PM on the hospital campus at 1200 E. Tremont Street in Hillsboro, followed by an open house.
3. Due to the Christmas holiday, the next Coordinating Committee meeting will begin on Friday, Dec. 26, 2025, at 8:30 AM in the County Board Room at the Historic Courthouse.

APPOINTMENTS:

1. **Mark Meisner to the Pitman-Zanesville #2 County Zone #33 Drainage District**
Update/Approval: Motion by Donaldson and second by Young to reappoint Mark Meisner for a three-year term to the Pitman-Zanesville #2 County Zone #33 Drainage District beginning Jan. 1, 2026. All in favor, motion carried.
2. **Greg Weitekamp to the Zanesville #3 County Zone #15 Drainage District**
Update/Approval: Motion by Donaldson and second by Beck to reappoint Gregory Weitekamp for a three-year term to the Zanesville #3 County Zone #15 Drainage District beginning Jan. 1, 2026. All in favor, motion carried.

PAY BILLS AND PAYROLL: Motion by Hughes and second by Murzynski 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, January 13, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. in the County Board Room, Hillsboro, Illinois.** Chairman Donaldson said 2025 had been a good year, and wished everyone a Merry Christmas. Board member Beason recognized Treasurer Nikki Lohman for her recent selection as President of the Illinois County Treasurers Association to a round of applause. **Motion by Murzynski and second by Hughes to adjourn the Full Board Meeting. All in favor, motion carried.** Meeting adjourned at 6:17 p.m. Minutes respectfully recorded and submitted by Montgomery County Clerk and Recorder Sandy Leitheiser.