

**Montgomery County Board Minutes
For Tuesday, March 10, 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, March 10, 2026. The meeting was called to order by County Board Chairman Doug Donaldson at 5:30 p.m.

Roll call was taken – 13 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, Chad Ruppert, Patty Whitworth, Evan Young

Members Absent: None

Pledge of Allegiance to the flag was led by board member Bill Bergen.

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

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

Approval of Minutes of Previous County Board Meeting: **Motion by Young and second by Hancock to approve the minutes of the previous regular County Board meeting held on Tuesday, February 10, 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 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** – 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 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 Corso and second by Daniels 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 had nothing to report.
- **Health Department** -- Whitworth had nothing to report.
- **IL Association of County Officials** -- Hancock had nothing to report.
- **MCEDC** -- Daniels pointed out a printed report from Executive Director Kaitlyn Fath with two new priorities, ASARCO and COAD.
- **Senior Citizens Board** -- Daniels reported flooring replacement work had begun.
- **UCCI** – Corso had nothing to report.
- **U of I** – Ruppert reported the state director of Extension would be in Hillsboro the following day.
- **WCDC** – Jones had nothing to report.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- Rick Graden, committee member of Citizens Against Heartland Greenway, told the board 8,300 acres in Audubon Township has been leased for sequestration and asked the board to endorse SB2842 to eliminate eminent domain for CO2 pipelines.
- Montgomery County resident Dan Mulch said he is concerned about 100 St. Louis Arch-height wind turbines scheduled to be placed in the north end of the county. He resents that neighbors are being told his family has signed up when they have not. He asked the county to develop a GIS map of leases signed with Pattern for the Beacon website, and questioned Pattern’s website providing no location and heights of towers as well as the lack of information about the project.
- Macoupin County resident Jason Goby said he is in the process of returning to the family farm in Montgomery County, and doesn’t want the beautiful scenery disrupted by wind turbines. He asked the County Board to investigate Pattern Energy and research wind turbines, noting potential declining property values and the use of prime farmland.
- Montgomery County resident Dionne Manzer expressed concern about wind turbines anticipated to be visible from her property, which is already scheduled to be surrounded by a solar project. She asked the board if the benefits outweigh negative impacts such as impacts on birds, property values, and tensions between neighbors. She encouraged board members to talk with landowners and get their opinions about these projects.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

COORDINATING COMMITTEE: Given by County Board Chairman Doug Donaldson:

1. **Information Systems Report Update/Approval:** Chairman Donaldson reported IS Director Curt Watkins told the committee he has finished jury server upgrades, 911 flex-server migration, and replacing 911 PCs. He said his department continues to work on finishing court grant items, installing new PCs, phone system upgrades, and has begun bandwidth upgrades. Watkins stated that work on the GIS transition to Bruce Harris, as well as remote DevNet access, has stalled due to the department’s workload. Donaldson reported staffing solutions may be necessary.

2. **Privacy Notice Policy Update/Approval:** Donaldson said the committee reviewed and recommended the policy developed by Bushue HR and the county IS Department. Motion by Donaldson and second by Ruppert to approve the Montgomery County Privacy Notice Policy. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 23, pages 174-176).
3. **EMA/EPA Report Update/Approval:** Donaldson stated EMA/EPA Director Dan Hough reported attending numerous training sessions over the past few months. He also said he has begun work the building EMA will receive at the Highway Department.
4. **HELP Safety Committee Update/Approval:** Donaldson said the new committee's first meeting was Tuesday morning, March 10, 2026 in the County Board Room at the Historic Courthouse. County Board Administrator Plunkett said the committee reviewed work to be completed before the next meeting, scheduled for Tuesday, May 12, 2026 at 9:00 a.m.

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

1. **MCEDC Update/Approval:** Ruppert deferred to MCEDC Executive Director Kaitlyn Fath, who reported the ASARCO tour on Friday, March 6, 2026 was well attended and clean-up of about 200 residential sites will begin this summer. She said the US EPA estimates a timeline of 4-8 years until complete remediation at a cost of \$60 million.
2. **Animal Control Update/Approval:** Ruppert reported population at Animal Control was up before a successful adoption event at Rural King. He reported advertising is underway to fill a staff vacancy, and a rabies clinic is planned for April 11, 2026.
3. **Green Diamond Bike Trail Parcel Legal Description Proposal Update/Approval:** Ruppert stated in order to complete the transfer of parcel 03-21-381-004 of the Green Diamond Bike Trail to the Village of Waggoner, survey work must be done; and the committee recommended a proposal from Nail Land Surveying of Litchfield. **Motion by Ruppert and second by Bergen to approve an agreement with Nail Land Surveying of Litchfield for an estimated \$3,000 to survey parcel 03-21-381-004. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 23, page 177).**
4. **DCEO Energy Transition Grant Update/Approval:** Ruppert reported County Board Administration has requested budget revisions for the first phase and a time extension to complete work funded by the second phase.
5. **Tourism Grant Application Update/Approval:** Ruppert stated the committee reviewed the grant application form, which is now on the county website, and will review submitted applications at their April meeting.
6. **Wind and Solar Ordinance Update/Approval:** Ruppert described proposed changes in the wind ordinance required by the Energy Omnibus bill signed by the Governor on Jan. 8, 2026. He said proposed changes include a lower maximum fee cap, a requirement to conclude the public hearing within 60 days, an increase in the timeframe to start the project from one year to five years, and the removal of Fish & Wildlife Survey requirements. **Motion by Ruppert and second by Whitworth to approve the amended Montgomery County Ordinance Regulating the Siting of Wind Energy Conversion Systems. Motion carried (3 no votes from Jones, Young, Beason). (For copy, see Resolution Book 23, pages 178-201). Motion by Ruppert and second by Hughes to approve the amended Montgomery County Ordinance for Solar Energy**

Farm and Solar Garden Installations in Unincorporated Montgomery County, Illinois. Motion carried (3 no votes from Jones, Beck, Young). (For copy, see Resolution Book 23, pages 202-220).

7. **Battery Storage and Data Centers Update/Approval:** Ruppert reported state legislation allows a county to establish standards for energy storage systems only if they have a zoning ordinance.
8. **CO2 Pipeline Eminent Domain Resolution 2026-05 Update/Approval:** Ruppert said the committee discussed a request to support Illinois SB2842 prohibiting the use of eminent domain to install CO2 pipelines. County Board Administrator Plunkett read the Resolution 2026-05. **Motion by Ruppert and second by Beason to approve the Resolution 2026-05 in support of Illinois SB2842. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 23, page 221).**
9. **County Starting Salary Update/Approval:** Ruppert said the committee continues to work with Bushue HR with the goal of having a recommendation before FY2027 budget work begins. He said the next Bushue meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 12, 2026 beginning at 1 p.m.
10. **Pattern Energy Aerial Raptor Nest Survey Update/Approval:** Ruppert reported the planned Pattern Energy aerial raptor nest survey by helicopter has been rescheduled for March 15-20.

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

1. **Maintenance Report Update/Approval:** Hughes highlighted a few of the 46 items on Maintenance Director Phil Ernst's report, including submitting and receiving the updated elevator certificates for all three elevators from the State Fire Marshall's office. He said the incinerator near the Animal Control Facility was in need of repair. He also stated Cinric Painting reached out to establish a date range for the previously approved work on the County Board Room as well as the Historic Courthouse front porch (from April 15-30).
2. **Snow Blade for Side-by-Side Update/Approval:** Hughes said the committee reviewed a proposal to modify the Sheriff's four-by-four vehicle to be used as a snow plow, but would like Ernst to look at a new snow blower option.
3. **Maintenance Agreements Update/Approval:** Hughes said the committee reviewed and recommended Planned Maintenance Agreements from Henson Robinson Company in Springfield to provide scheduled maintenance for the two Lochinvar Knight XL high efficiency boilers for \$1,895/year and the Daikin AGZ Chiller for \$2,000/year. **Motion by Hughes and second by Beck to approve the Planned Maintenance Agreement with Henson Robinson Company for the Daikin AGZ Chiller for \$2,000/year. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Hughes and second by Whitworth to approve the Planned Maintenance Agreement with Henson Robinson Company for the two Lochinvar Knight XL high efficiency boilers for \$1,895/year. All in favor, motion carried.**
4. **127 N. Main Street Property Update/Approval:** **Motion by Hughes and second by Beason to go into closed session at 6:11 p.m. to discuss real estate. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Hughes and second by Whitworth to return to open session at 6:34 p.m. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Hughes and second by**

Murzynski to submit a final offer for the property at 127 North Main Street in Hillsboro contingent on the results of an independent inspection at the county's expense. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Voting yes: Beason, Beck, Bergen, Corso, Daniels, Donaldson, Hancock, Hughes, Jones, Murzynski, Ruppert, Whitworth, Young. **All in favor, motion carried.**

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

1. **Section 26-03115-00-BR – Butler Grove Twp. N. 15th Ave. Bridge Replacement Engineering Agreement Update/Approval:** Murzynski described an engineering agreement with Hurst-Rosche to replace an existing wood deck bridge with a new drainage structure along with local channel improvements and associated roadway improvements on North 15th Ave. in Butler Grove Township. He stated the improvement will be funded 80% by the Township Bridge Fund, with the remaining 20% coming from the local funds. **Motion by Murzynski and second by Corso to approve the engineering agreement with Hurst-Rosche for an estimated \$60,895.00 to replace the Bridge on North 15th Ave in Butler Grove Township. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 23, pages 222-234).**
2. **2026 Pipe Culvert Letting Update/Approval:** Murzynski reported the county did not receive any bids for the 2026 Pipe Culvert Letting.
3. **Resolution 2026-05 appropriating funds for 50/50 bridge pile repair on Red Bridge Tr., Hillsboro Township Update/Approval:** Murzynski said the committee reviewed the resolution and map for a 50/50 bridge pile repair on Red Bridge Trail in Hillsboro Township. He stated the bridge is in a state of severe deterioration and is currently closed. The cost of the project is estimated at \$60,000 with Montgomery County responsible for half the cost and Hillsboro Township Road District responsible for the other half. **Motion by Ruppert and second by Young to approve Resolution 2026-05 to appropriate funds from the County Aid to Bridge Fund to pay one-half of an estimated \$60,000 project to repair bridge piles on Red Bridge Trail in Hillsboro Township. All in favor, motion carried (Murzynski and Daniels abstained). (For copy, see Resolution Book 23, pages 235-236).**
4. **Elmore Solar Road Use Agreement Update/Approval:** Murzynski said the committee reviewed the road use agreement for Elmore Solar in Farmersville with CF Farmersville Solar. The agreement states CF Farmersville Solar has the right to use approximately one mile of Main Street (Mine Ave.) to access the proposed location during the construction of a solar farm in Farmersville. The agreement outlines size and location of the entrance culvert and entrance road, as well responsibilities regarding use and upkeep of the road. **Motion by Murzynski and second by Whitworth to approve the CF Farmersville Solar – Montgomery County Road Use Agreement. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 23, pages 237-250).**
5. **Heavy Equipment Shed Update/Approval:** Murzynski said Highway Department forces are continuing to move miscellaneous equipment into the new building.

FINANCE & BUDGET COMMITTEE REPORT: Given by Committee Vice Chairwoman Connie Beck:

1. **SOA Office Update/Approval:** Beck noted 220 Disabled Exemptions and 645 Senior Exemptions received as of March 3. She said the SOA report also noted a meeting with the Bruce Harris company representatives, which has been acquired by Beacon.
2. **Capital Improvement & Coal Fund Reports Update/Approval:** Beck stated reports noted a January coal royalty payment of \$64,120.37 leaving a total Coal Fund balance of \$10.7 million.
3. **Special Service Area Ambulance Contracts Update/Approval:** Beck said the committee reviewed the FY2026 agreement with the Raymond-Harvel Area Ambulance Service. **Motion by Beck and second by Young to approve the agreement between the Montgomery County Board and Raymond-Harvel Area Ambulance Service. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 23, pages 251-253).**
4. **IPRF Work Comp Premium Return Update/Approval:** Beck noted after a Workers Compensation audit by Chief Deputy Trish Roemelin, Treasurer Lohman reported a premium refund of \$11,444 from Illinois Public Risk Fund (IPRF).
5. **Assignment of Tax Sale Certificate Update/Approval:** Beck said the committee discussed the seldom-used process of the Assignment of Tax Sale Certificate, as recommended in this case by the County Trustee. **Motion by Beck and second by Murzynski to approve the Assignment of Tax Sale Certificate of Purchase number 2023-00091 on parcel ID number 16-01-330-003 to Ryan Holland. All in favor, motion carried.**
6. **A/P and Payroll Expense Request for Office 047 Update/Approval:** Beck said County Clerk Leitheiser explained a request to take expenses for accounts payable and payroll checks, envelopes, and toner from the General Administrative budget in the General Fund rather than from the County Clerk and Treasurer budgets in the General Fund. Like copy paper and other items in the General Administrative budget, AP and payroll supplies are used for every county office; and the continuing increase in costs for those supplies will run over budgeted expense lines in the Treasurer's and County Clerk's office budgets. The committee recommended taking the expenses from the "Other Expense" line item in the General Administrative budget this year and implementing a separate line item in FY2027. **Motion by Beck and second by Daniels to pay vouchers of \$353.52 to Quill for checks, \$690.08 to Quill for envelopes, and \$334.99 to Paragon Micro for MICR secure toner from line item 100-047-540.012 in the General Administrative budget. All in favor, motion carried.**
7. **FY2027 Budget Process Update/Approval:** Beck described a schedule developed by County Board Administration and Treasurer Lohman setting out the FY2027 budget process schedule, beginning with setting wage changes and starting salaries in April, conducting budget hearings in August, and concluding with adopting the final budget in November. The committee agreed with the tentative schedule.
8. **Fund 375 Purchases Update/Approval:** Beck stated the committee reviewed Coal Fund 375 vouchers to GTSi for a Sheriff's Office vehicle build and to Victory Lane Chrysler for an EMA vehicle. **Motion by Beck and second by Murzynski to pay the voucher for \$450 to GTSi for Sheriff's Office vehicle equipment from Coal Fund 375. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Beck and second by Daniels to pay the voucher for \$26,863 for a 2023 Ram 1500 to Victory Lane Chrysler Dodge Jeep**

Ram from Coal Fund 375. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Beck and second by Murzynski to pay the voucher for \$3,188 for a 2023 Ram 1500 extended service warranty to Victory Lane Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram from Coal Fund 375. All in favor, motion carried.

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. Primary Election Day is Tuesday, March 17. Polling places are open from 6 a.m. through 7 p.m.
2. Members of the Historical Society of Montgomery County have displayed photos and descriptions of famous historical county residents in the main hallway on the first floor.

APPOINTMENTS: Motion by Donaldson and second by Hancock to appoint Matt Hoffman of Nokomis and Marvin Johnson of Nokomis to the Nokomis Fire Protection District. All in favor, motion carried.

PAY BILLS AND PAYROLL: Motion by Jones 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, Ruppert, Whitworth, Young. All in favor, motion carried.

ADJOURN: The next regular full board meeting will be on Tuesday, April 14, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. in the County Board Room, Hillsboro, Illinois. Motion by Murzynski and second by Hughes to adjourn the Full Board Meeting. All in favor, motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 6:49 p.m. Minutes respectfully recorded and submitted by Montgomery County Clerk and Recorder Sandy Leitheiser.