

Montgomery County Board Minutes **For Tuesday, April 8, 2025 – 5:30 PM**

The following are minutes of a regular meeting of the Montgomery County Board held at 5:30 p.m. at the Montgomery County Farm Bureau in Hillsboro, Illinois, on Tuesday, April 8, 2025. The meeting was called to order by County Board Chairman Doug Donaldson at 5:30 PM.

Roll call was taken – 11 members present, 3 members absent.

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

Members Absent: Bill Bergen, Keith Hancock, Andy Ritchie

Pledge of Allegiance to the flag was led by board member Chris Daniels.

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

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

Approval of Minutes of Previous County Board Meeting: **Motion by Beason and second by Corso to approve the minutes of the previous regular county board meeting held on Tuesday, March 11, 2025. All in favor, motion carried.**

CONSENT AGENDA:

1. **Animal Control Report** – None
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 thanked election workers and voters, noting the April 1, 2025 Consolidated Election had over 25 percent voter turnout.
5. **Enterprise Zone Report** – Mike Plunkett was present for questions and noted abatements for the year were completed.
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** – Kendra Niehaus was present for questions and noted the final abstract has been completed and will be delivered tomorrow to the Illinois Department of Revenue in Springfield by County Clerk Leitheiser.
15. **State's Attorney Report** – Andrew Affrunti was present for questions and noted an Assistant State's Attorney has accepted a position in Montgomery County.
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 Young and second by Beason 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 a meeting is scheduled for the following week.
- **ETSB / 911 Board** — Bergen was not present.
- **Health Department** — Whitworth had nothing to report.
- **IL Association of County Officials** — Hancock was not present.
- **MCEDC** — Hughes introduced Executive Director William Montgomery, who reported on recent conversations with Nextlink and stated he is working on increasing MCEDC membership.
- **Planning Commission** — Ritchie was not present.
- **Senior Citizens Board** — Daniels reported a line dance instructor was present at the last meeting and has planned monthly dances to be held in the future.
- **UCCI** — Corso had nothing to report.
- **U of I** — Ruppert had nothing to report.
- **WCDC** — Jones had nothing to report.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

1. North Litchfield Township Assessor Tom Baker reported on his efforts to access county DevNet software to increase productivity by entering his assessment data from the field. He said there would be no cost to the county, but the county Information Services department has concerns about data and would like an intergovernmental agreement. State's Attorney Andrew Affrunti said he has reviewed a sample intergovernmental agreement provided by Supervisor of Assessments Kendra Niehaus and is working with Information Services to resolve the issue. Chairman Donaldson said the item will be on the next Coordinating Committee agenda.
2. Citizen Bill Schroeder thanked Chairman Donaldson and Vice Chairwoman Whitworth for speaking against CWLP coal waste at the recent IDNR informal conference. He also pointed out the county has been without weather radio service for two and a half years, and shared telephone numbers for county board members to join him in contacting Rep. Mary Miller and Sen. Tammy Duckworth to reinstate a weather radio tower in Montgomery County.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

COORDINATING COMMITTEE: Given by County Board Chairman Doug Donaldson:

1. **Information Systems Report Update/Approval:** Donaldson reported IS Director Curt Watkins reported his department has begun working on court grant projects, has ordered 31 PCs and begun routine replacement, and has finished implementing multi-factor log-ins. He anticipates needing more internet bandwidth, a possible price increase on the new telephone system due to tariffs, and a switch to ArcPro for GIS.
2. **EMA Report Update/Approval:** Donaldson noted EMA Director Dan Hough expressed gratitude for a \$3,700 rural development grant awarded to his office by the Montgomery County Farm Bureau for a radio network. He also reported nearly 50

county employees completed AED/CPR training and the need for an EPA office administrative assistant. Hough added he will be attending training and a conference during the month of April. He said he is working on 13 new open dumping cases and reported the National Weather Service maintains it is still in contract negotiations regarding a new weather radio tower.

3. **Ad Hoc Committee to Address SB3455 Wooded Acreage Assessments Update/Approval:** Donaldson pointed out Committee Chairman Russ Beason reported Supervisor of Assessments Niehaus did an excellent job explaining procedures during the committee meeting on March 26, and former Champaign County SOA Stan Jenkins contributed a lot of information and offered support. Donaldson said the next committee meeting is scheduled for 6 p.m. Wednesday, April 16, in the County Board Room.
4. **National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week (April 13-19) Resolution 2025-5 Update/Approval:** Donaldson read the resolution and 911 Director Ed Boyd thanked the county board for their support. **Motion by Beason and second by Jones to adopt Resolution 2025-5 in support of National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week April 13-19. All in favor, motion carried. (See Resolution Book 22, Page 143).**

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

1. **Animal Control Update/Approval:** Ruppert reported as of last week, there were 22 animals at the facility. He said Litchfield has approved a contract with Animal Control. Personnel issues at Animal Control were discussed in executive session and the warden at the facility was terminated this past week. Ruppert noted the county is currently advertising for the Animal Control Warden vacancy and solicited applications.
2. **Tourism Grant Update/Approval:** Ruppert said 14 applicants have requested \$11,750 from the Tourism Grant and \$5,000 has been budgeted. The committee will score applications according to the rubric and be ready to discuss awards after the May committee meeting.
3. **City-Wide Clean-Up Update/Approval:** Ruppert stated the committee reviewed applications from the villages of Harvel and Ohlman. **Motion by Ruppert and second by Daniels to award City-Wide Clean-Up Grants of up to \$750 to the Village of Harvel and the Village of Ohlman. All in favor, motion carried.**
4. **Montgomery Springs Solar Update/Approval:** Ruppert reported at a public hearing on Monday, March 24 the committee reviewed a good map, a complete application, and heard no comments from neighbors. He said the committee will be working with the applicant to develop a set of conditions to be reviewed next month before making a recommendation.
5. **Litchfield Solar Agreement with Hurst-Rosche Update/Approval:** Ruppert noted a public hearing has been scheduled for 6 p.m. Monday, April 28. The committee reviewed the proposal from Hurst-Rosche. **Motion by Ruppert and second by Whitworth to approve a proposal from Hurst-Rosche for independent review of the proposed Litchfield Solar project for a fee not to exceed \$3,500. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 22, Pages 144-145).**
6. **Bushue Background Screening Agreement Update/Approval:** Ruppert said the committee reviewed the background screening proposal by Bushue HR for a base price of \$50 per applicant as needed. State's Attorney Affrunti said he found no issues in his

review of the contract. In response to a question from board member Jones, Ruppert said the standard background check looks back seven years, but a longer timeframe can be requested. **Motion by Ruppert and second by Jones to approve a background screening agreement with Bushue HR. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 22, Page 146-157).**

7. **DCEO Energy Transition Grant Update/Approval:** County Board Administrator Mike Plunkett noted Phase I remains on schedule, but a grant agreement for Phase II remains pending. He said Hillsboro Community Planner Sarah McConnell facilitated a virtual meeting with DCEO contacts.
8. **Employee Handbook Update/Approval:** Ruppert reported the committee reviewed updates and said they are still working with Bushue on tech language. Bushue will be on site for a meeting on Thursday, April 10.
9. **Historic Courthouse Notary Update/Approval:** Ruppert stated the committee reviewed a partial list of forms required in the Historic Courthouse needing notarized. The committee hopes to review a complete list of documents requiring notarization next month.
10. **Montgomery Local Labor First Initiative Update/Approval:** Ruppert reported committee member Chris Daniels said she has met with labor leaders and she is researching language with other sources for a packet she intends to have ready next month.

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

1. **Maintenance and Cleaning Issues and Report Update/Approval:** Hughes described a substantial amount of work underway at the Historic Courthouse. First, he noted two circuit boards in the building's elevator need to be programmed before the elevator is again operational, and he hopes work will be completed by the end of the week. Second, Hughes said a 150-pound concrete headstone fell off the northeast corner tower of the Historic Courthouse two weeks ago. Since then, emergency repairs have been underway and the rest of the building has been checked for similar issues. The fallen headstone and another loose headstone have been replaced with white brick to mimic the original look and a seal coating is being applied to flaking concrete window ledges. Third, roof replacement work began on Monday, April 7, and should be completed by the end of the week.
2. **Courthouse Complex Chiller Update/Approval:** Hughes said the new chiller is scheduled to ship from Mexico on April 14, and told the board controls may need to be updated next fiscal year.
3. **Historic Courthouse Flower Bed/Pots Update/Approval:** Hughes said Imagine Hillsboro volunteers have agreed to maintain the flower pots on the Historic Courthouse lawn and the flower bed on the south side. Imagine Hillsboro volunteer Bob Schwander was present at the meeting and reported about work completed thus far.
4. **Hillsboro Market Update/Approval:** Hughes said Imagine Hillsboro has requested to move their monthly Saturday morning summer markets to the parking lot south of the Courthouse Complex. Circuit Clerk Daniel Robbins reported the judges have no issues with this use as long as the grounds are left clean. **Motion by Hughes and second by**

Whitworth to allow Imagine Hillsboro to host monthly Saturday morning markets on the parking lot south of the Courthouse Complex. All in favor, motion carried.

5. **New Hire for Cleaning Position Update/Approval:** Hughes noted both Maintenance Director Ernst and Circuit Clerk Robbins reported the new custodian at the Courthouse Complex is doing an excellent job, but it appears four hours per day is not enough time for the work. The committee voted to allow Ernst to schedule him for up to five hours a day as needed, and then revisit this schedule in a month.

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

1. **County 2025 MFT Oil Letting Results Update/Approval:** Murzynski said the lone bid from Louis Marsch of Morrisonville was opened and reviewed by Engineer Cody Greenwood and is in board packets. In response to a question from board member Young, Greenwood said the base oil bid is \$2.95 a gallon. **Motion by Murzynski and second by Jones to award the low 2025 county MFT bid for oil to Louis Marsch. All in favor, motion carried.**
2. **Township 2025 MFT Oil Letting Results Update/Approval:** Murzynski reported bids from Litchfield Bituminous of Hillsboro and Louis Marsch of Morrisonville. Those bid tabulation sheets are also in board packets. **Motion by Murzynski and second by Corso to award the low 2025 township MFT bids for oil to Litchfield Bituminous and Louis Marsch. All in favor, motion carried (Murzynski abstained).**
3. **UKA Virden Wind Road Use Agreement Update/Approval:** Murzynski reported Engineer Greenwood will meet with attorneys before the next committee meeting to continue developing the road use agreement.
4. **Resolution 2025-2 appropriating funds for 50/50 culvert replacement on Crabtree Trail, South Litchfield Township Update/Approval:** The committee discussed the resolution and reviewed the map for a pipe culvert replacement on Crabtree Trail in South Litchfield Township. The anticipated \$60,000 cost would be split 50/50 between the county and the township, with the county portion coming from the County Aid to Bridge Fund. **Motion by Murzynski and second by Young to approve Resolution 2025-02 appropriating funds for a 50/50 culvert replacement on Crabtree Trail in South Litchfield Township. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 22, Pages 158-159).**
5. **SB2504, SB2217, and HB2515 – Township Consolidation and Low Population Township Dissolution Resolution 2025-06 Update/Approval:** Murzynski said the committee discussed the status of three pieces of proposed state legislation which would eliminate or consolidate various township functions. SB2504 would eliminate township and multi-township assessors in counties with populations less than 50,000. SB2217 would dissolve all townships with a population less than 5,000, and HB2515 would dissolve all townships with a population of less than 500. Donaldson read the proposed resolution in opposition, and both Engineer Greenwood and Treasurer Lohman reported their state organizations stand opposed to the proposed legislation. 911 Director Boyd noted townships respond speedily to calls to clear roads for first responders. **Motion by Murzynski and second by Jones to adopt Resolution 2025-06 in opposition to SB2504, SB2217, and HB2515. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 22, Page 160).**

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

1. **SOA Report Update/Approval:** Beck said Supervisor of Assessments Kendra Niehaus reported Board of Review hearings were conducted on Monday, March 31. She has begun advertising for a vacant part-time data collection position and has a full-time employee who will be retiring in June. Niehaus reported an MTA district under contract to the county may be considering signing a contract with an assessor to do the work instead of the county. She also told the committee she filed an incident report for a senior citizen who fell while coming up the south stairs to the Historic Courthouse.
2. **Capital Improvement & Coal Fund Reports Update/Approval:** Beck noted the February coal royalty payment was \$160,901.92.
3. **University of Illinois Extension Agreement Update/Approval:** Beck said the committee reviewed and discussed the annual agreement with the University of Illinois Extension service, for which the county has agreed to levy \$157,000 in property taxes. **Motion by Beck and second by Young to approve the agreement with University of Illinois Extension. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 22, Pages 161-162).**
4. **Coroner Mutual Aid Agreement Update/Approval:** Beck said the committee also reviewed the statewide mutual aid agreement submitted by Montgomery County Coroner Randy Leetham. **Motion by Beck and second by Jones to approve the Coroner Mutual Aid Agreement. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 22, Pages 163-168).**
5. **Mobile Home Delinquent Tax Sale Fee Resolution 2025-07 Update/Approval:** Beck said the committee reviewed and discussed a resolution presented by Treasurer Nikki Lohman to allow her office to collect a \$10 sale and error fee on delinquent mobile homes beginning with the tax sale in October 2025. **Motion by Beck and second by Ruppert to approve Resolution 2025-07 authorizing a \$10 fee to be imposed on the sale of delinquent mobile home taxes. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 22, Page 169).**
6. **Transfer 5 Coal Rights Parcels to Keyrock Energy Update/Approval:** The committee reviewed and discussed five mined coal parcels in Bois D'Arc and Pitman Township sold by the trustee to Keyrock Energy. **Motion by Beck and second by Whitworth to transfer parcels 01-27-100-301, 01-26-100-301, and 01-35-100-301 in Bois D'Arc Township, and 03-04-300-302 and 03-02-100-302 in Pitman Township to Keyrock Energy, LLC. All in favor, motion carried. (For copies, see Resolution Book 22, Pages 170-174).**
7. **Dispersal of Redemption/Reconveyance Default Funds Resolution Update/Approval:** Beck said the committee reviewed the resolution for parcel 13-06-179-001 in Witt, sold on Oct. 25, 2021 for \$7,206.16. To date, the redemption party has paid only \$1,326. After several attempts by the trustee to collect the balance, the party has defaulted and the collected funds should be disbursed. **Motion by Beck and second by Young to approve the Resolution disbursing \$1,326 on parcel 13-06-079-001 in Witt. All in favor, motion carried. (For copies, see Resolution Book 22, Page 175).**

8. **UCCI Salary & Benefits Survey Update/Approval:** Beck said the committee reviewed and discussed the UCCI Salary & Benefits Survey, which is available on file in the County Board Administration office.
9. **Solar Credit Proposals/Contracts Update/Approval:** Beck said State's Attorney Affrunti reviewed proposals and contracts from Solar on Earth and Nexamp for solar credits; he explained the process for buying solar credits and said he believes it would be in the county's best interest to build its own solar arrays to power county buildings instead of entering into a contract with one of these companies. After discussion, Beck said the committee voted to reject the solar credit proposals from Solar on Earth and Nexamp and continue the discussion of county solar panels.
10. **County Travel Ordinance Update/Approval:** Beck said State's Attorney Affrunti reported to the committee after reviewing the proposed amendments to the Montgomery County Travel Ordinance that he does not believe the statute allows the county board to pre-approve overnight travel as suggested as recommended changes to Section II of the ordinance. She said he agreed with the Section III change to the ordinance referencing the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) website for travel location reimbursement rates. The State's Attorney reiterated the ordinance does not apply to funds not under county board control. Hughes said he believes state law requires a pre-approval process and does not reference funds to which the statute applies. He said special funds are still county money and questioned who watches over them. Affrunti said he understood Hughes's concerns and believes they are valid, but not statutory. County Clerk Leitheiser noted special fund expenditures are on the pre-approved vendor list. Hughes maintained that statutorily, he believes a travel voucher paid recently through a special fund controlled by the State's Attorney should have been roll call voted by the County Board. Young said the County Board's control of special funds is via the budget process. Affrunti said staff travel requirements should be addressed in the employee manual, and board member Daniels suggested the county solicit advice from Bushue HR. **Motion by Beck and second by Daniels to approve the amended Montgomery County Travel Ordinance as presented. ROLL CALL VOTE:** Voting yes: Beck, Corso, Jones, and Whitworth. Voting no: Beason, Daniels, Donaldson, Hughes, Murzynski, Ruppert, and Young. **Motion failed 4-7.**

APPROVAL OF THE COMMITTEE REPORTS & MINUTES:

Motion by Beason and second by Corso to approve the five committee reports and minutes. All in favor, motion carried.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. Chairman Donaldson reported IDNR had scheduled a Public Hearing for 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, April 9 at the Montgomery County Farm Bureau regarding a significant revision application to permit No. 424 for the Hillsboro Energy Deer Run Mine, but due to the technical need for a virtual court reporter, the meeting location has been changed to the Montgomery County Court Complex.
2. Donaldson reported the next meeting with Bushue HR will be Thursday, April 10, beginning at 1 p.m. in the County Board Room.

3. Donaldson reported the Illinois EPA has scheduled question-and-answer public meetings at the East Fork Township Building at 3 p.m. and 5 p.m. Thursday, May 1, about the Coffeen Power Station ash pond closure process.
4. Donaldson reported BLH has scheduled its 2025 Electronics Recycling Drives for 9 a.m. to noon Saturday, May 3, at the former Litchfield Recycling Center.

SCHEDULE CHANGES: None

APPOINTMENTS:

Robert Matli as Trustee to the Raymond Community Fire Protection District Update/Approval: **Motion by Beck and second by Young to appoint Robert Matli as Trustee to the Raymond Community Fire Protection District from March, 2025, through March, 2028. All in favor, motion carried.**

PAY BILLS AND PAYROLL:

Motion by Murzynski and second by Whitworth to pay all approved bills and Payroll. All in favor, motion carried. ROLL CALL VOTE: Voting yes: Beason, Beck, Corso, Daniels, Donaldson, Hughes, Jones, Murzynski, Ruppert, Whitworth, and Young. **All in favor, motion carried.**

ADJOURN:

The next regular full board meeting will be on Tuesday, May 13, 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 6:47 p.m. Minutes respectfully recorded and submitted by Montgomery County Clerk and Recorder Sandy Leitheiser.