

## **Montgomery County Board Minutes** **For Tuesday, June 10<sup>th</sup>, 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, June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2025. The meeting was called to order by County Board Chairman Doug Donaldson at 5:30 PM.

**Roll call** was taken – 13 members present, 1 member 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

**Members Absent:** Evan Young

**Pledge of Allegiance to the flag** was led by County Board member Mark Hughes.

**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, Jones, Murzynski, Ritchie, Ruppert, Whitworth. **All in favor, motion carried.**

**Approval of Minutes of Previous County Board Meeting:** **Motion by Hughes and second by Jones to approve the minutes of the previous regular county board meeting held on Tuesday, May 13<sup>th</sup>, 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, and he commented courtroom AV renovations have begun.
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 and noted receiving a \$500 grant from Grain Belt Express for a radio upgrade. He also said he received seven applications for the deputy director position and has received grants and donations to replace a drone.
7. **Health Department Report** – Hugh Satterlee was present for questions.
8. **Highway Department Report** – Cody Greenwood was present and added construction work at the intersection of Coffeen Road and Seven Sister has begun, which will close the intersection for a maximum of 30 days.
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 not present.
14. **SOA Report** – Kendra Niehaus was present for questions.
15. **State's Attorney Report** – Andrew Affrunti 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 Whitworth 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 the committee met Monday, June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2025 and reviewed six applicants. They also voted to fund half of the 911 Rave Alert System.
- **ETSB / 911 Board** – Bergen had nothing to report.
- **Health Department** -- Whitworth reported the board will meet in July.
- **IL Association of County Officials** -- Hancock had nothing to report.
- **MCEDC** -- Hughes reported the board will meet on Thursday, July 12<sup>th</sup>, and also stated Executive Director William Montgomery has announced his resignation.
- **Planning Commission** -- Ritchie had nothing to report.
- **Senior Citizens Board** -- Daniels reported working on DCEO grant projects.
- **UCCI** – Corso reported he recently attended a leadership conference.
- **U of I** – Ruppert reported the board will meet Thursday, and 4-H shows will begin soon.
- **WCDC** – Jones reported the board met May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025 and is anticipating funding cuts.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** None

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

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

1. **Information Systems Report Update/Approval:** Donaldson said Information Services Director Curt Watkins reported to the committee he has been completing court grant work, replacing PCs, performing server upgrades and data room restructuring, and preparing for the move to ArcGIS Pro. Cyber security updates are complete; however, monthly training participation is down among employees.
2. **EMA Report Update/Approval:** EMA/EPA Director Dan Hough reported completing EMA training. He is in the process of hiring a deputy director and is planning a tabletop exercise for the Historic Courthouse this fall.
3. **911 Rave Alert System Update/Approval:** 911 Director Ed Boyd presented information on a Motorola Rave alert system to notify cell phones in a determined area about local emergencies, such as weather events, mass evacuations, boil orders, etc. The cost is \$26,500 covering five years, and the ETSB has determined it cannot make the expenditure. Dan Hough reported the 708 Board has committed to funding half of the cost. Whitworth asked if the funding will be required up front, and Boyd responded affirmatively. Boyd will present the plan at the scheduled July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025, Mayors Meeting.
4. **Ad Hoc Committee to Address SB3455 Wooded Acreage Assessments Update/Approval:** Donaldson said the committee will meet next on Tuesday, July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025 at 6 p.m. in the Courthouse Annex.
5. **Rules Committee Meeting Update/Approval:** A meeting date has been set for 1 p.m. Thursday, July 17<sup>th</sup>, 2025, for the committee to re-examine department head termination procedures.

6. **Sesquicentennial Banner from Tim Elliott Update/Approval:** County Board Administrator Mike Plunkett noted the 1971 Montgomery County Sesquicentennial Banner on display in the County Board Room was donated by Tim Elliott of Hillsboro.

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

1. **Animal Control Update/Approval:** Ruppert said Animal Control Warden Tricia Papin is working to reduce the inventory of 18 dogs and 15 cats at the facility. He said the new mower, tranquilizer gun cabinet, and cremains processor are working well, and service will begin soon in Litchfield.
2. **Scheduled Solar Hearings Update/Approval:** Ruppert said solar siting permit public hearings are set for Monday, June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2025, at 6 p.m. for RDC IL N24th Solar near Harvel, and on Monday, July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2025 at 6 p.m. for Atticus Solar and Finch Solar on Route 127, and on Monday, July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025 at 6 p.m. for Montgomery IL Solar 1, all in the County Board Room at the Historic Courthouse in Hillsboro, Illinois.
3. **Litchfield Solar Update/Approval:** Ruppert said Project Developer Kayleigh Furth of Carson Power was present for the committee meeting and reviewed information she provided which was requested at the April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025 public hearing about Litchfield Solar, on Old Route 66 south of Litchfield. She reviewed the drain tile survey map, option to purchase, fence detail, conversations with South Litchfield Drainage District #1, an email from the Litchfield Airport Authority expressing no objections, conversations with neighbor Dee Leitschuh regarding the preference of no landscaping to the north, and correspondence with the Illinois Department of Transportation. Leitschuh said she spoke to other drainage district officers who would prefer to meet when the spring planting season is completed. **Motion by Ruppert and second by Bergen to approve the siting permit for Litchfield Solar with the following conditions:** 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) The developer shall provide a signed agreement with South Litchfield Drainage District #1 for replacement of existing clay tile shown on the submitted drain tile survey; 5) As noted by the applicant, no vegetative landscape to be installed on the North perimeter of the project; 6) The developer shall provide a copy of the required IDOT permit for the entrance culvert off Old Route 66; 7) Litchfield Solar LLC will offer the Contingent First Right of Refusal Agreement to be signed between Litchfield Solar LLC and Denelle E. Leitschuh Revocable Trust prior to the beginning of construction of the solar facility. All in favor, motion carried.
4. **Solar Application Review Agreements with Hurst-Rosche Update/Approval:** Ruppert said the committee recommended approval of the standard agreements with Hurst-Rosche for independent review of three solar applications. **Motion by Ruppert and second by Murzynski to approve an agreement with Hurst-Rosche for**

independent review of the RDC IL N24th Solar project for a not-to-exceed fee of \$3,500. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 22, pages 208-209). Motion by Ruppert and second by Daniels to approve an agreement with Hurst-Rosche for independent review of the Atticus Solar project for a not-to-exceed fee of \$3,500. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 22, pages 210-211). Motion by Ruppert and second by Beck to approve an agreement with Hurst-Rosche for independent review of the Finch Solar project for a not-to-exceed fee of \$3,500. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 22, pages 212-213).

5. **Small Biz Start-Up Grant Follow-Up Update/Approval:** Ruppert reported County Board Administration recently sent a letter to Small Biz Start-Up Grant recipients who have not yet submitted final grant reports. He said many have since responded and some new businesses have yet to open. Ruppert stated the committee will continue to monitor their progress.
6. **DCEO Energy Transition Grant Update/Approval:** Ruppert reported the Phase II grant agreement has been signed by the county and is now awaiting state signatures. Phase III has been announced and County Board Administration has been in contact with First Due Consulting representative Dan Rogers for grant writing services. **Motion by Ruppert and second by Jones to approve an agreement with First Due Consulting of Witt for reimbursable grant writing for a not-to-exceed fee of \$1,500. All in favor, motion carried.**
7. **Employee Handbook Update/Approval:** Ruppert noted since the presentation to the full board in May, the only change to the proposed new Employee Handbook is the introduction of language mirroring changes made by the County Board to the Montgomery County Travel Ordinance last month. **Motion by Ruppert and second by Whitworth to approve the Montgomery County Employee Handbook, effective upon passage. All in favor, motion carried.**
8. **Montgomery First Local Labor Initiative Update/Approval:** Ruppert said committee members discussed the proposed downward adjustment numbers of 5% up to a maximum of \$20,000 local business adjustment. He said the committee would like to continue researching those numbers and give State's Attorney Andrew Affrunti an opportunity to offer legal advice.
9. **Viriden Wind Extension Application Update/Approval:** Ruppert introduced Jeff Smith and Jack Butler of UKA, along with their attorney Amy Antonioli. Project representative Butler said in spite of the change in the management team, UKA is completely committed to the 100MW wind project east of Farmersville. Ruppert reminded the board the Montgomery County Wind Siting Ordinance requires construction to begin within one year of siting approval, which was granted by the County Board on June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Per County Board permit conditions, UKA has requested an extension to December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2026. The committee recommended an extension to September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025 to allow time to meet and determine how much of a time extension will actually be required. **Motion by Ruppert and second by Beason to approve the Resolution 2025-11 extending the construction deadline for Viriden Wind Energy to September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 22, page 214).**

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

1. **Maintenance Report Update/Approval:** Hughes said the Maintenance Department responded to 51 work orders in May. He stated adjustments continue to be made on the new chiller at the Courts Complex and new “A” coils are scheduled to be installed at several units at the Historic Courthouse.
2. **Alpha Controls Presentation Update/Approval:** Hughes said what the committee thought was going to be a presentation by Alpha Controls on managing Courts Complex HVAC controls was a presentation about the company’s energy savings solutions using software and artificial intelligence instead. He said the committee will continue to discuss the proposal.
3. **Elevator Maintenance Contract Update/Approval:** Hughes said he and Maintenance Director Ernst would like to examine the elevator contract in light of the recent 10-week shut-down, but still need to discuss the issue with the State’s Attorney. Hughes stated the item will be on next month’s agenda.
4. **Generator Pad Bids Update/Approval:** Hughes said the matter will be considered next month when the DCEO grant agreement for Phase II is signed and executed.

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

1. **Section 23-01134-00-BR Audubon Township White Settlement Trail Bridge Replacement Update/Approval:** Murzynski reported the committee opened sealed bids from C-Hill Civil Contractors of Campbell Hill, Stutz Excavating of Alton, and Yamnitz & Associates of Fieldon for this project. Bids ranged from \$359,621.10 to \$412,021.45. The project will be 80% township funded and 20% county funded. **Motion by Murzynski and second by Hancock to award the apparent low bid of \$359,621.10 to Yamnitz & Associates of Fielden for Section 23-01134-00-BR in Audubon Township for the White Settlement Trail Bridge Replacement. ROLL CALL VOTE:** Voting yes: Beason, Beck, Bergen, Corso, Daniels, Donaldson, Hancock, Hughes, Jones, Murzynski, Ritchie, Ruppert, Whitworth. **All in favor, motion carried.**
2. **Section 23-18119-00-BR Witt Township East 22<sup>nd</sup> Road Bridge Replacement Update/Approval:** Murzynski said the committee also opened sealed bids from C-Hill Civil Contractors of Campbell Hill, Stutz Excavating of Alton, and Yamnitz & Associates of Fieldon for this project. Bids ranged from \$376,672.23 to \$428,670.56. The project will be 80% township funded and 20% county funded. **Motion by Murzynski and second by Whitworth to award the apparent low bid of \$376,672.23 to Yamnitz & Associates of Fielden for Section 23-18119-00-BR in Witt Township for the East 22<sup>nd</sup> Road Bridge Replacement. ROLL CALL VOTE:** Voting yes: Beason, Beck, Bergen, Corso, Daniels, Donaldson, Hancock, Hughes, Jones, Murzynski, Ritchie, Ruppert, Whitworth. **All in favor, motion carried.**
3. **Walshville Trail Improvement Project Update/Approval:** Murzynski reported engineers at WHKS are working on the project development report, which includes identifying existing drainage patterns and side street tie-ins. He said construction remains on schedule to begin in 2026 or 2027. County Engineer Greenwood added remaining IDOT Rebuild Illinois funds must be authorized by July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025. **Motion by Murzynski and second by Whitworth to approve a resolution to appropriate**

**\$150,000 for Section 20-00144-00-FP Phase I roadway design for improvement and relocation of the Major Collector roadway through Walshville. ROLL CALL VOTE:** Voting yes: Beason, Beck, Bergen, Corso, Daniels, Donaldson, Hancock, Hughes, Jones, Murzynski, Ritchie, Ruppert, Whitworth. **All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 22, page 215).**

4. **Coffeen Road/Seven Sisters Avenue Intersection Project Update/Approval:** Engineer Greenwood told the board the intersection was closed and work began on Monday, June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2025. The contract calls for 30 working days, but Greenwood said he anticipates the closure to remain in effect for 2-3 weeks depending upon weather.
5. **Resolution 2025-6 appropriating funds for the payment of the County Engineer's Salary for 2025 Update/Approval:** Murzynski said committee members reviewed minimum recommended County Engineer salaries provided by the Illinois Department of Transportation, which increased 10% over last year. By participating in the program, 50% of the County Engineer's salary is reimbursed; the remaining 50% is paid through MFT funds. Chairman Donaldson noted the salary is set to meet the IDOT recommendation for reimbursement. **Motion by Murzynski and second by Bergen to increase the County Engineer's salary by 10% to \$132,255.75 effective December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 22, pages 216-217).**

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

1. **SOA Report Update/Approval:** Ritchie said Supervisor of Assessments Kendra Niehaus reviewed the items on her monthly report, noting the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) approved with North Litchfield Township required some small typographical corrections. State's Attorney Affrunti will make the required corrections and present the agreement to Chairman Donaldson for his signature.
2. **Capital Improvement & Coal Fund Reports Update/Approval:** Ritchie pointed out coal royalty payments of \$142,936.05 in March and \$185,258.38 in April, both received in April. The payments bring the total Coal Fund balance to \$10,608,855.87.
3. **DevNet Contract Update/Approval:** Ritchie said the committee reviewed and recommended a new contract with DevNet for five years beginning August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025 for \$45,868.57 per year, payable quarterly. **Motion by Ritchie and second by Daniels to approve a five-year contract with DevNet beginning August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025, for \$45,868.57 per year. All in favor, motion carried.**
4. **Convey Parcel 15-05-228-007 in Litchfield Update/Approval:** Ritchie said the committee reviewed and recommended the resolution to transfer the Litchfield parcel at 817 W. Sargent Street sold by the trustee. **Motion by Ritchie and second by Beck to convey parcel 15-05-228-007 in the City of Litchfield to Donna M. Hemken. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 22, page 218).**
5. **Audit Report Update/Approval:** Ritchie said the committee recommended approval of the FY2024 audit report under review since presentation at the April County Board meeting. **Motion by Ritchie and second by Daniels to approve the FY2024 Audit Report. All in favor, motion carried.**

6. **MCSO K9 Squad Box Update/Approval:** Ritchie reported the current K-9 is a year from retirement and the Sheriff's department is making plans for a new K-9 to be trained and assigned to a deputy. Upgrades to the deputy's squad vehicle will have to be made to handle the K-9, and State's Attorney Affrunti agreed to pay the estimated \$10,550 cost from his Forfeiture Fund. Ritchie said the deputy will be reimbursed the \$2,100 for a doghouse concrete kennel pad poured at his residence.
7. **Non-Union & Part-Time Salary FY2026 Salary Increases Update/Approval:** Ritchie said the committee reviewed a spreadsheet with FY2025 county employee salaries, collective bargaining agreement (CBA) raises for FY2026, and potential raises of varying percentages and dollar amounts. After discussion, the committee first voted to recommend raises based on a percentage rather than a dollar amount. After even more discussion the committee ultimately voted unanimously to recommend a 5.5% increase to non-union and part-time salary line items for FY2026. Ritchie pointed out the increase would be to the budget line item and distributed by department heads as they see fit. **Motion by Ritchie and second by Beck to recommend 5.5% non-union and part-time budget line item salary increases for FY2026. All in favor, motion carried.**
8. **Pre-Approved Vendor List Update/Approval:** Continuing a discussion beginning with the May committee meeting, Ritchie reported State's Attorney Affrunti has researched statutory authority for each special fund and has no issue with removing them from the Pre-Approved Vendor List, per audit recommendations. Affrunti, Plunkett, Lohman and Leitheiser will meet prior to next month's committee meeting to review special funds on the Pre-Paid Vendor list for potential removal. The committee will also discuss a process to voucher special fund expenses such as citing statute on the "County Board Approved Signature" line of vouchers, and a process by which the County Board will review special fund vouchers.
9. **Montgomery County Farm Bureau Parking Lot Work Update/Approval:** Ritchie said the Montgomery County Farm Bureau has asked the board to participate in a project to seal and re-stripe the Farm Bureau parking lot, frequently used by the county. The committee agreed with Chairman Donaldson's recommendation to pay half of the \$4,200 estimated cost. Chairman Donaldson reminded the board the Farm Bureau has been generous with allowing the County Board to use meeting space when requested. **Motion by Ritchie and second by Murzynski to spend \$2,100 from Fund 375 to pay for half of the seal and re-stripe work at the Montgomery County Farm Bureau parking lot. All in favor, motion carried.**

#### **APPROVAL OF THE COMMITTEE REPORTS & MINUTES:**

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

#### **ANNOUNCEMENTS & SCHEDULE CHANGES:**

1. The next meeting with Bushue HR is scheduled for 1 p.m. on Thursday, June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2025, in the County Board Room at the Historic Courthouse in Hillsboro.
2. The next meeting of the Wooded Acreage Ad Hoc Committee will be at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025, in the Courthouse Annex on the Courthouse Square in Hillsboro.

3. A public hearing for the proposed RDC IL N24 Solar project near Harvel is scheduled for 6 p.m. on Monday, June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2025, in the County Board Room at the Historic Courthouse in Hillsboro. Public hearings for Atticus Solar and Finch Solar will begin at 6 p.m. on Monday, July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2025, in the County Board Room at the Historic Courthouse in Hillsboro, and for Montgomery IL Solar 1 at 6 p.m. on Monday, July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025, in the County Board Room at the Historic Courthouse in Hillsboro.

**APPOINTMENTS:** None

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

**ADJOURN:** The next regular full board meeting will be on Tuesday, July 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025 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 6:28 p.m. Minutes respectfully recorded and submitted by Montgomery County Clerk and Recorder Sandy Leitheiser.