

Montgomery County Board Minutes For Tuesday, July 14, 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, July 14, 2026. The meeting was called to order by County Board Chairman Doug Donaldson at 5:30 p.m.

Roll call was taken – 14 members present, 0 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, Patty Whitworth, Evan Young

Members Absent: None

Pledge of Allegiance to the flag was led by County Board member Hancock.

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

Approval of Minutes of Previous County Board Meeting: **Motion by Corso and second by Jones to approve the minutes of the previous regular county board meeting held on Tuesday, June 9, 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 noted Chief Deputy Clerk Tricia Maulding had achieved 20 years of dedicated service the past week. (For copy of Leitheiser's comments, see Resolution Book 24, page 1.)
5. **Enterprise Zone Report** – Mike Plunkett was present for questions and reported the first application of the year has been received.
6. **EMA & EPA Reports** – Dan Hough was present for questions and reported the National Weather Service and Montgomery County State's Attorney have both approved a contract to remount a NOAA weather radio in the county at the county owned Cress Hill Tower.
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 and reported 35 volunteers working at the Specialty Court Annex building the previous week. Supplies were donated by local businesses.
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** – Tysha Mullen was present for questions and reported Field Assessor Larry Lemon had completed training and earned his Certified Illinois Assessing Officers (CIAO) credentials.
15. **State’s Attorney Report** – Brian Shaw was present for questions.
16. **Treasurer’s Report** – Nikki Lohman was not present.
17. **VAC Report** – Cassandra Hampton was not present.

APPROVAL OF ITEMS ON THE CONSENT AGENDA: Motion by Hancock and second by Whitworth to approve the items on the Consent Agenda. All in favor, motion carried.

LIAISON REPORTS:

- **CEFS Board** — Beason reported the CIPT transition to Effingham County continues.
- **708 Board** – Murzynski had nothing to report.
- **ETSB / 911 Board** – Hancock had nothing to report.
- **Health Department** — Whitworth reported the budget meeting is set for Aug. 18.
- **IL Association of County Officials** — Hancock had nothing to report.
- **MCEDC** — Gudgel had nothing to report.
- **Senior Citizens Board** — Daniels reported the board will be reviewing bids for DCEO kitchen work at the next meeting.
- **UCCI** – Corso reported the next meeting is scheduled for July 28 in Galena.
- **U of I** – Ruppert reported the next meeting will be held later this month.
- **WCDC** – Jones reported the next meeting is set for Aug. 20.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

1. County resident Bill Schroeder updated the County Board on Hillsboro Energy’s application to raise the height Refuse Disposal Area (RDA) 2 from 65 feet to 100 feet. He reported mine engineer responses to the modification were filed June 16 and the comment period ended June 17. Schroeder said he feels breach concerns raised at the Public Hearing were not addressed, and he questioned whether an emergency action plan has ever been completed with the County EMA office. He asked members to keep aware of the activities surrounding the Deer Run Mine’s requests for IDNR modifications.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

COORDINATING COMMITTEE: Given by County Board Chairman Doug Donaldson:

1. **Information Systems Report Update/Approval:** Donaldson reported IS Director Curt Watkins continues to work on secure door access, phone system upgrades, replacing PCs and finishing Cress Hill Tower building work. He reported the uptick in phishing emails has continued, and he is also collecting applications for potential additional staff.
2. **EMA/EPA Report Update/Approval:** Donaldson said Director Dan Hough reported to the committee on an issue in Fillmore during which cattle were running at large. During the incident, message boards were borrowed from IDOT. He also provided mutual aid to Coles County after a tornado and discussed a Community Organizations Active in Disasters (COAD) meeting scheduled for that evening.
3. **HELP Safety Committee Update/Approval:** Donaldson reported the Coordinating Committee reviewed a Return to Work Policy recommended by Bushue HR and the Safety Committee. **Motion by Donaldson and second by Murzynski to approve the**

Montgomery County Return to Work Policy. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 24, pages 2-13).

4. **FOIA Bot Verification Update/Approval:** Donaldson noted the county is now utilizing recommendations from Bushue HR on verifying suspicious FOIA requests.

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

1. **Nokomis Small Business Competition Update/Approval:** Ruppert reported Nokomis Community & Economic Development Fellow Audra Elam addressed the committee on a small business competition the city is launching with a grand prize package that includes a building. He stated the application period opens Aug. 1, 2026.
2. **Animal Control Update/Approval:** Ruppert reported Animal Control responded to 37 calls in June and adopted out 15 animals the first week of July. He said the incinerator is inoperable, and the Finance & Budget Committee will be recommending funding for replacement.
3. **MCEDC Update/Approval:** Ruppert reviewed MCEDC Executive Director Kaitlyn Fath's report, noting EPA clean-up work at Asarco in Taylor Springs will likely begin with ponds and residential properties. He said Fath's report also included an IHDA Strong Communities grant application, meetings with Small Biz Grant recipients, tourism, the community calendar, cellular coverage, and the COAD project timeline.
4. **MCEDC FY2027 Budget Update/Approval:** Ruppert said the committee discussed the request by MCEDC to increase the \$15,000 contribution for FY2027 and perhaps moving the contribution from the General Fund to Fund 375. He stated the committee will make a recommendation next month prior to August budget hearings.
5. **Small Biz Grant Update/Approval:** Ruppert said the committee continues to monitor the status of seven Small Biz Grant recipients who have yet to open. He stated the committee also reviewed new applicants and will invite them to the August committee meeting.
6. **Green Diamond Bike Trail Update/Approval:** Ruppert reported on the survey and transfer of remaining Green Diamond Bike Trail property to the Village of Waggoner, who has requested the \$22,000 payment for oil and chip promised as a reimbursement in the February 2025 intergovernmental agreement. After discussing the village's difficulty in paying for the oil and chip in advance, the committee recommended requesting the payment be made from Fund 375; that discussion will continue.
7. **Wind & Solar Ordinance Update/Approval:** Ruppert highlighted proposed new wind and solar ordinances suggested by Attorney Andrew Keyt, who is now under contract with the County Board. Ruppert said the proposed new ordinances are consistent with state and federal statutes, would add building permit requirements, require applicants to supply more information up front, and appear to give the County Board more decision-making criteria during the public hearing process. The committee requested adding language requiring leases to be recorded, requiring drainage district agreements, and requiring operating manual recommended setbacks. Ruppert said new versions with this added language will be reviewed next month.
8. **DCEO Energy Transition Grant Update/Approval:** Ruppert stated with the award of the final Small Biz Grants, the county will close out Phase 1, Phase 2 is 73% complete, and a grant agreement for Phase 3 is anticipated in the next few weeks.

9. **Union Negotiation Schedule Update/Approval:** Ruppert will meet with the next Sheriff's Union in August to exchange proposals and schedule negotiation meetings.
10. **Pattern Energy Update/Approval:** Ruppert pointed out the list of Pattern land agents filed in the County Clerk's Office on June 25, 2026, and expressed disappointment no action has been taken on a required "do not contact" list. He said the committee also read a letter from county resident and landowner John Rundquist, who expressed frustration with the misinformation that he had signed a lease with Pattern. Ruppert also referenced Atwell land agents are presently working in the former UKA Wind footprint representing Terra-Gen, and that company has also filed their land agent registry with the County Clerk's Office.

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

1. **Maintenance Report Update/Approval:** Hughes noted the Maintenance Department completed 64 work orders in June and also worked several overtime hours.
2. **Animal Control Roof Reseal Bid Proposal Update/Approval:** Committee Vice Chairman Russ Beason reported the committee reviewed two proposals for approximately \$25,000 to reseal the leaking metal roof at Animal Control, as well as a proposal for approximately \$29,000 to reroof the building. The committee asked Maintenance Director Ernst to research other options.
3. **Animal Control Incinerator Bid Proposal Update/Approval:** Hughes said the committee reviewed a proposal to replace the inoperable Animal Control incinerator for \$11,205 plus \$750 installation. The committee recommended paying for the replacement from Fund 375, to be addressed in the Finance & Budget Committee report.
4. **Historic Courthouse Boiler Replacement Update/Approval:** Hughes said the committee received only one bid for \$94,888 from Henson Robinson Company of Springfield to replace the inoperable boiler in the Historic Courthouse. He stated \$78,050 of the cost will be reimbursed by the DCEO Energy Transition Grant. **Motion by Hughes and second by Jones to award the low bid of \$94,888 to Henson Robinson Company of Springfield to replace the Historic Courthouse boiler. ROLL CALL VOTE:** Voting yes: Beason, Beck, Corso, Daniels, Donaldson, Gudgel, Hancock, Hughes, Jones, Murzynski, Ruppert, Schieferdecker, Whitworth, Young. **All in favor, motion carried.**
5. **Outdoor Picnic Table Update/Approval:** Hughes said the committee recommended replacing the picnic table on the north side of the Historic Courthouse with an 8-foot metal table with thermoplastic coating. **Motion by Hughes and second by Beck to purchase an 8-foot metal picnic table from Uline for \$1,095. All in favor, motion carried.**
6. **Signage for County Buildings Update/Approval:** The committee discussed uniform signage for new county buildings.
7. **127 N. Main Update/Approval:** Hughes said the committee reviewed three proposals to replace the ramp and porch in front of the building ranging from \$65,000 to \$19,500 but later learned the low bid was not correct.

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

1. **Portable Changeable Message Signs Update/Approval:** Murzynski reported Engineer Cody Greenwood and EMA/EPA/911 Director Dan Hough presented a plan to make an FY2027 budget request for \$40,000 from Fund 375 for two portable changeable message signs. Greenwood said the signs are effective in controlling traffic during construction and emergency events, and messages can be changed remotely. Hough said his department requested remote signs from the state during the recent Fillmore cattle event, but they took a long time to arrive and could only be used on state right-of-way. Murzynski said the signs would also be useful to the Sheriff's Office. County Board member Jones, who works for IDOT, said the state may have used signs available on iBid, the State of Illinois online auction, and Murzynski said he would pursue this option.
2. **Bid results for 50/50 culvert replacement (MCHD Project 1283) on E. 17th Rd., Irving Township Update/Approval:** Murzynski said the committee reviewed two bids for a concrete box culvert to be delivered to the county and installed by the Highway Department on East 17th Road in Irving Township. **Motion by Murzynski and second by Young to award the low bid of \$49,535.62 to JJ's Concrete Construction of Montgomery, IN, for a 50/50 culvert replacement in Irving Township. All in favor, motion carried.**
3. **Resolution 2026-08 appropriating funds for 50/50 pipe culvert replacement (MCHD Project 1284) on Capps Ave., Nokomis Township Update/Approval:** The committee recommended the resolution and map for a 50/50 double-pipe culvert replacement on Capps Avenue just outside the City of Nokomis in Nokomis Township. **Motion by Murzynski and second by Hancock to approve the resolution appropriating County Aid to Bridge Funds for a \$60,000 50/50 pipe culvert replacement in Nokomis Township. ROLL CALL VOTE:** Voting yes: Beason, Beck, Corso, Daniels, Donaldson, Gudgel, Hancock, Hughes, Jones, Murzynski, Ruppert, Schieferdecker, Whitworth, Young. **All in favor, motion carried.** (For copy, see Resolution Book 24, pages 14-15).
4. **Resolution 2026-09 appropriating funds for 50/50 pipe culvert replacement (MCDH Project 1285) on N. 1st Ave., Walshville Township Update/Approval:** The committee recommended the resolution and map for a 50/50 pipe culvert replacement on North 1st Avenue in Walshville Township. **Motion by Murzynski and second by Jones to approve the resolution appropriating County Aid to Bridge Funds for an \$18,000 50/50 pipe culvert replacement in Walshville Township. All in favor, motion carried.** (For copy, see Resolution Book 24, pages 16-17).
5. **Section 20-00144-00-FP Walshville Tr. Road Improvement Engineering Agreement Update/Approval:** Engineer Greenwood said Phase I of the Walshville Bypass project engineering is nearly complete and introduced Rick Allender and Cory Chamberlain of WHKS. Allender said the project will eliminate six sub-standard 10-mph curves and replace them with a bypass to the east and south of Walshville with two 40-mph curves. **Motion by Murzynski and second by Whitworth to approve the Local Public Agency Engineering Services Agreement with WHKS of Springfield for the completion of Phase I preliminary engineering and Phase II design engineering for an amount not to exceed \$247,564 to be paid from the Federal Aid Matching Fund. ROLL CALL VOTE:** Voting yes: Beason, Beck, Corso, Daniels, Donaldson, Gudgel,

Hancock, Hughes, Jones, Murzynski, Ruppert, Schieferdecker, Whitworth, Young. **All in favor, motion carried.** (For copy, see Resolution Book 24, pages 18-26).

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

1. **Audit Presentation Update/Approval:** Robyn Klingler and Hope Peters of Scheffel Boyle distributed completed FY2025 audit reports and Klingler said the two had given a detailed report to the Finance & Budget Committee the previous week. Klingler described the audit process, which includes receipts, purchases and payroll, conferences with third-parties such as confirming coal royalty payments. She said the auditor issued the cleanest opinion possible. The report about internal controls had two findings, and the report on federal expenditures included three findings. She noted, in total, county receipts exceeded expenses by \$1.5 million in FY2025. Beck asked the board to review the audit over the next month before voting on it.
2. **Capital Improvement & Coal Fund Reports Update/Approval:** From the monthly reports, Beck noted a May coal royalty payment of \$159,430.50 and a Coal Fund 375 balance of \$10.8 million.
3. **HAZMAT Vehicle Update/Approval:** EMA Assistant Joe Gasparich presented a request for a \$40,000 four-year loan from the county to purchase a used 1996 truck with 30,000 miles that would replace both Hazmat trailers. Gasparich described the condition and need for the vehicle. The committee recommended the Hazmat team acquire for a \$10,000 down payment with the remaining \$30,000 budgeted from Fund 375 in FY2027. **Motion by Beck and second by Daniels to approve \$10,000 from Fund 375 for a down payment of a 1996 Hazmat truck and budget for the remaining \$30,000 in FY2027, with the entire \$40,000 to be repaid by Dec. 31, 2030. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Beck and second by Young to approve the Memorandum of Understanding with the Montgomery County Hazmat Team. All in favor, motion carried.** (For copy, see Resolution Book 24, page 27).
4. **Solar Federal Tax Credit Refund Update/Approval:** Beck reported a federal tax credit refund of \$151,075 for solar projects at the Health Department, Highway Department, and Senior Center.
5. **Commission Election Judges Update/Approval:** County Clerk Leitheiser requested the County Board approve the commission of the list of Election Judges so the names can be submitted to the Circuit Court. **Motion by Beck and second by Jones to approve the commission of the list of Election Judges as presented terms from November 2026 through March 2028. All in favor, motion carried.** Leitheiser publicly thanked Election Judges as the unsung heroes of elections.
6. **Sheriff's Office Intergovernmental Agreement Update/Approval:** No action was taken.
7. **Fund 375 Purchases Update/Approval:** Beck reported the committee reviewed Fund 375 vouchers presented for approval, as well as requests for expenses from the fund. The committee rejected a \$22,000 voucher to the Village of Waggoner for oiling and chipping the Green Diamond Trail, voicing a preference to pay the contractor directly. Board member Jones said with a budget of \$60,000 per year, the village cannot afford to repair the trail before oiling and chipping and requested the committee reconsider their decision. **Motion by Beck and second by Young to approve payment of vouchers from Fund**

375 to Hillsboro Electric for \$2,189.50; Ace Hardware for \$224.49; Weiss Construction for \$5,550; Kirby Painting for \$1,250; Uline for \$8,504.06 and \$3,019.72; Advance Security Resources for \$200; Nail Land Surveying for \$3,000; Cullison & Vandever for \$100; and Truck Centers Inc. for \$173,712. **ROLL CALL:** Voting yes: Beason, Beck, Corso, Daniels, Donaldson, Gudgel, Hancock, Hughes, Jones, Murzynski, Ruppert, Schieferdecker, Whitworth, Young. **All in favor, motion carried.** **Motion by Beck and second by Daniels to approve Fund 375 expenditures of \$16,838 for the Historic Courthouse boiler in excess of grant funding, and \$11,955 to replace the Animal Control incinerator. All in favor, motion carried.**

8. **State FY2027 COLA Salary Adjustments Update/Approval:** Beck noted the committee reviewed the state salary adjustments for the State's Attorney, Public Defender and Sheriff, based on a 4.1% cost of living adjustment (COLA) for the State's Attorney. Beginning July 1, 2026 the State's Attorney's salary will be \$176,830.31; the Public Defender's salary will be \$159,147.28; and the Sheriff's salary will be \$141,464.44. **Motion by Beck and second by Hancock to set the salary for the State's Attorney at \$176,830.31; for the Public Defender at \$159,147.28; and for the Sheriff at \$141,464.44 beginning July 1, 2026. ROLL CALL:** Voting yes: Beason, Beck, Corso, Daniels, Donaldson, Gudgel, Hancock, Hughes, Jones, Murzynski, Ruppert, Schieferdecker, Whitworth, Young. **All in favor, motion carried.**

APPROVAL OF THE COMMITTEE REPORTS & MINUTES: Motion by Hughes and second by Daniels to approve the committee reports and minutes. **All in favor, motion carried.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS & SCHEDULE CHANGES: Donaldson stated a Mayors Meeting has been scheduled for 5 p.m. Wednesday, July 22, 2026 in the County Board Room at the Historic Courthouse.

APPOINTMENTS: None

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

ADJOURN:

The next regular full board meeting will be on Tuesday, August 11, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. in the County Board Room, Hillsboro, Illinois. **Motion by Jones and second by Murzynski to adjourn the Full Board Meeting. All in favor, motion carried.** Meeting adjourned at 6:53 p.m. Minutes respectfully recorded and submitted by Montgomery County Clerk and Recorder Sandy Leitheiser.