

# Montgomery County Board Minutes

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For Tuesday, July 9th, 2024 – 5:30 PM

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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 9th, 2024.

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, Bill Bergen, Doug Donaldson, Ken Folkerts, Mark Hughes, Jeremy Jones (arrived at 5:34 p.m.), David Loucks, Ethan Murzynski, Andy Ritchie, Chad Ruppert, Bob Sneed, Patty Whitworth and Evan Young

**Members Absent:** None

Chairman Donaldson observed a moment of silence in memory of former Montgomery County Board member Gene Knodle, who served from 1984 through 1992 in roles including Vice-Chairman and Finance Committee Chairman of the County Board. Mr. Knodle also was Chairman of the Public Building Commission when the Courthouse Complex was built. He passed away on Sunday, June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2024 at age 85.

**Pledge of Allegiance to the flag** was led by County Board member Chad Ruppert.

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

**ROLL CALL VOTE:** Voting yes: Beason, Beck, Bergen, Donaldson, Folkerts, Hughes, Loucks, Murzynski, Ritchie, Ruppert, Sneed, Whitworth, Young (Jones was absent for the vote). **All in favor, motion carried.**

**Approval of Minutes of Previous County Board Meeting:**

**Motion by Beck and second by Bergen to approve the minutes of the previous regular county board meeting held on Tuesday, June 11th, 2024. All in favor, motion carried.**

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

- 1. Animal Control Report** – Emily Gerl, report submitted.
- 2. Circuit Clerk’s Report** – Daniel Robbins, report submitted, was present for questions.
- 3. Coroner’s Report** – Randy Leetham, report submitted.
- 4. County Clerk and Recorder’s Report** – Sandy Leitheiser, report submitted, was present for questions.
- 5. Enterprise Zone Report** – Christine Daniels, report submitted, was present for questions.
- 6. Environmental Protection Agency Report** – Christine Daniels, report submitted, was present for questions.
- 7. Health & TB Department Report** – Hugh Satterlee, report submitted, was present for questions.

8. **Highway Department Report** – Cody Greenwood, report submitted, was present for questions.
9. **Information Services Report** – Curt Watkins, no report.
10. **Maintenance Superintendent Report** – Phil Ernst, report submitted.
11. **Probation Office Report** – Banee Ulrici, report submitted, was present for questions.
12. **Public Defender’s Report** – Erin Mattson, no report.
13. **ROE – Monthly, Quarterly & Annual Reports** — Julie Wollerman, report submitted.
14. **Sheriff’s Report** – Rick Robbins, report submitted, was present for questions.
15. **SOA Report** – Kendra Niehaus, report submitted, was present for questions. She informed members she is scheduled for a presentation to the Litchfield Senior Club on August 25<sup>th</sup>, 2024.
16. **State’s Attorney Report** – Andrew Affrunti, report submitted, was present for questions.
17. **Treasurer’s Report** – Nikki Lohman, report submitted, was present for questions. She added the first property tax installment due date is Friday, July 12<sup>th</sup>, and said to date her office had collected just over \$25 million, about 45% of the total.
18. **V.A.C. Report** – Cassandra Hampton, report submitted.

**APPROVAL OF ITEMS ON THE CONSENT AGENDA:**

**Motion by Hughes and second by Whitworth to approve the items on the Consent Agenda. All in favor, motion carried.**

**LIAISON REPORTS:**

- **708 Board** – Murzynski reported the board met last night and reviewed its FY2025 budget.
- **CEFS Board** — Beason had nothing to report.
- **ETSB / 911 Board** – Bergen had nothing to report.
- **Health Department** — Whitworth reported the board next meets next on July 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024.
- **IL Association of County Officials** — Bergen had nothing to report.
- **MCEDC** — Hughes had nothing to report.
- **Planning Commission** — Ritchie had nothing to report.
- **Senior Citizens Board** — Folkerts reported the board is awaiting DCEO reimbursement and will review senior surveys on July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024. The board has two vacancies to fill.
- **UCCI** – Ruppert reported an upcoming meeting will be held on July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2024.
- **U of I** – Beck reported the committee needs more Montgomery County members.
- **WCDC** – Jones had nothing to report.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** Citizen Dionne Manzer expressed appreciation to the Montgomery County Board, Development & Personnel Committee and the County Board Administration office for their additional work on solar and wind farm siting. Citizen Bill Schroeder asked the board to continue to press for updates on the CO2 test well in Audubon Township, the sink hole on Route 185, and the need for reinstating weather radio status for Montgomery County.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

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

- 1. Information Systems Report Update/Approval:** Chairman Donaldson said according to IS Director Curt Watkins, county buildings are now connected to the redundant fiber ring; the HVFD has yet to be connected. Watkins has been prepping for both the court grant work and the interior door work in the County Clerk's office. He recommended the county use IS contingency funds for a \$95,000 phone system upgrade and hopefully reimburse the fund with the DCEO Energy Transition grant.
- 2. EMA Report Update/Approval:** Donaldson deferred to EMA Director Kevin Schott, who invited board members and office holders to a Montgomery County Community Wellness Committee summit, a legislative and town hall meeting set for Monday, August 5<sup>th</sup>, from 6-8 p.m. at Lincoln Land Community College in Litchfield.
- 3. West Central Development Council/Job Center Board/CEO Board Update/Approval:** Donaldson said the next meeting is set for Thursday, July 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024.
- 4. Labor Disaster Relief Team MOU Update/Approval:** Donaldson said last month LiUNA offered the services of highly-trained QRF (quick response force) to Montgomery County. He said LiUNA's disaster response teams deploy after disasters such as weather events. When requested by local EMA, LiUNA teams from Rock Island to Marion (including a new team headquartered at the Labor Local office in Hillsboro) can respond quickly with manpower, heavy equipment and highly-trained operators, along with light equipment such as chainsaws with highly-trained operators. He said the teams are licensed, insured, and work at no cost to the county. They deploy to remove downed trees and other structures from public and private property so utility and rescue work is not delayed. Donaldson said EMA Director Kevin Schott worked with LiUNA to set up the necessary Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to begin the process and State's Attorney Affrunti reviewed and endorsed the MOU. **Motion by Young and second by Jones to approve the Memorandum of Understanding between Montgomery County and the Laborers Disaster Response Team. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 21, page 182).**
- 5. DCEO Energy Transition Grant Ad Hoc Committee Meeting Update/Approval:** Donaldson said the ad hoc committee met on June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024 and July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024 in preparation for the July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024 grant application deadline. **Motion by Whitworth and second by Hughes to approve applying for the allocation of DCEO Energy Transition Grant funds as presented. ROLL CALL VOTE: Voting yes: Beason, Beck, Bergen, Donaldson, Folkerts, Hughes, Jones, Loucks, Murzynski, Ritchie, Ruppert, Sneed, Whitworth and Young. All in favor, motion carried.**
- 6. Long Term Recovery Meeting (COAD) Update/Approval:** Donaldson said COAD is a process through which tax-exempt donations can be accepted and disbursed in the case of a natural disaster or other emergency. County Board Administration is working with MCEDC to appoint a committee to receive tax-exempt donations and distribute funds utilizing the COAD process for Montgomery County emergency use.
- 7. Illinois Regional Archives Depository (IRAD) System Update/Approval:** Treasurer Lohman reported learning about IRAD, a department of the Illinois State Archives that potentially offers micro-filming and scanning at no cost. Chairman Donaldson stated the County Board Administration, the Supervisor of Assessments, and Sheriff's Office are interested in learning more about these potential services.

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

1. **Animal Control Municipal Billing Update/Approval:** Ruppert said new contracts will be discussed at the next Mayors Meeting. He said Animal Control Warden Emily Gerl is meeting with the Irving Village Board tonight.
2. **Animal Control Policy Update/Approval:** Ruppert stated the committee is still working on the policy. He reported he visited Animal Control earlier in the day and noted the facility is over capacity. He said Warden Gerl showed the committee a “no kill” shelter award the facility received based on euthanasia rate statistics.
3. **Wind & Solar Permit Fees Update/Approval:** Ruppert said the committee reviewed information from UCCI compiled by County Board Administration from 25 counties throughout the state. Currently, Montgomery County’s ordinances require a \$2,500 fee for a solar siting permit and \$50,000 fee for a wind siting permit. After discussion, the committee favored a fee structure based on a “per megawatt” with a fee cap. **Motion by Ruppert and second by Hughes to change language in the county Solar Ordinance to reflect a non-refundable application fee equal to \$2,500 per megawatt of proposed nameplate capacity up to a maximum fee of \$250,000 effective immediately. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 21, pages 183-200). Motion by Ruppert and second by Jones to change language in the county Wind Ordinance to reflect a non-refundable application fee equal to \$2,500 per megawatt of proposed nameplate capacity up to a maximum fee of \$250,000 effective immediately. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 21, pages 201-227).**
4. **Bushue HR Update/Approval:** Ruppert said County Board Administration has scheduled a meeting for all office-holders to attend after the next Coordinating Committee meeting. The Bushue meeting will begin at 10:15 a.m. Thursday, July 25th, 2024.
5. **DCEO Energy Transition Grant Small Business Start-Up Incentive Update/Approval:** Ruppert said the committee will consider all applications received to date at their next meeting. So far, there are nine applications for this grant.
6. **North Sun 22c Solar Application Update/Approval:** Ruppert stated after two nights of hearings, the committee found the North Sun 22c project meets state requirements. HE reported neighbor agreements have been reached with the two closest to the project, and both neighbors signed letters expressing no opposition to the project. A new project map indicated setbacks had been increased to 100 feet to the north and west and 200 feet to the south. Ruppert said the developer has also been working with the local draining district and communicating progress with the county. **Motion by Ruppert and second by Bergen to approve a siting permit for North Sun 22c on the condition the project reach an agreement regarding the existing tile main with the Raymond-Rountree Drainage District. ROLL CALL VOTE:** Voting yes: Beason, Beck, Bergen, Donaldson, Hughes, Jones, Loucks, Murzynski, Ritchie, Ruppert, Sneed, Whitworth, Young. Voting no: Folkerts. **Motion carried 13-1.**

7. **Plains Solar Update/Approval:** Ruppert reported the public hearing on the proposed Witt Road project, southeast of the Ameren underground gas storage facility began on Monday, July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, and was recessed until Monday, August 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Ruppert noted this date may be changed to a time later in the fall because another adjacent landowner needs to be notified. He said the committee has also requested an updated site plan map, updated contact information, and maps with distances from the project to neighboring residences.

**BUILDINGS & GROUNDS COMMITTEE REPORT:** Given by Committee Chairman Bob Sneed:

1. **Maintenance and Cleaning Issues and Report Update/Approval:** Sneed noted Maintenance Director Phil Ernst highlighted many of the 52 items on his monthly report.
2. **DAR Traveling Display Request Aug. 3-9, 2024 Update/Approval:** Sneed said the Christiana Tillson Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) has requested permission to display their Revolutionary War Veterans display on the Historic Courthouse lawn for Old Settlers, and Sneed said the committee unanimously agreed to grant the request. The display will be up August 3-9, 2024.
3. **Historic Courthouse Historical Marker Update/Approval:** Sneed reported Jeff Dunn was unable to attend the committee meeting and asked to be placed on the August committee agenda. Through email, he complimented the Historic Courthouse lawn and offered to provide bricks from his building that match the Historic Courthouse for the county to use as spares. Sneed said the county appreciated and accepted the offer.
4. **New Courthouse Roof Replacement Bid Opening Update/Approval:** Sneed reported the committee opened four sealed bids for the project, ranging from \$108,000 to \$188,000. After substantial committee discussion, the committee determined the low bid meets specs. **Motion by Sneed and second by Beason to award the low bid of \$108,380 to Central Roofing of Mattoon to replace the Courts Complex roof.** **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Voting yes: Beason, Beck, Bergen, Donaldson, Folkerts, Hughes, Jones, Loucks, Murzynski, Ritchie, Ruppert, Sneed, Whitworth, Young. **All in favor, motion carried.**
5. **Surplus Old Jail Generator Bid Opening Update/Approval:** Sneed said the committee opened two bids, one for \$1,550 and other for \$1,700 for the old jail generator the County Board declared as surplus last month. Sneed said the committee voted to sell the generator to the high bidder, Brad Niemann, for \$1,700.
6. **Interior Door Project for County Clerk's Office Update/Approval:** Sneed reported work is progressing, and County Clerk Leitheiser thanked the county board for their support.
7. **County Board Room Tech Grant Update/Approval:** Sneed said electric work has been completed on schedule.

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

1. **UKA Virden Wind Road Use Agreement Update/Approval:** Murzynski reported Engineer Cody Greenwood has been working with UKA and their consultant on a road use agreement. The Virden Wind developer has not finalized the construction haul route yet, and Greenwood needs to study the final haul route before determining pre-construction road needs.
2. **Vistra Coal Ash Impoundment Closure Plan Update/Approval:** Murzynski said the committee discussed a request from Vistra for the county to let the Illinois EPA know if it prefers an impoundment structure at Coffeen Power Station be closed in place rather than closed by removal. Engineer Greenwood told the committee closure by removal would result in over 46,000 truckloads of material transported to a local landfill, averaging out to a truckload every two minutes. **Motion by Murzynski and second by Whitworth to express by letter to Illinois EPA the county believes an impoundment structure at Coffeen Power Station should be closed in place. All in favor, motion carried.**
3. **Walshville Bypass Road Update/Approval:** Murzynski reported a meeting date will be set at a location in Walshville, likely at Village Hall, to discuss the proposed bypass with the public. The meeting should be within the next few months.
4. **Surplus Equipment Update/Approval:** Murzynski said Engineer Greenwood asked the committee to declare two Bush Hog rotary cutters as surplus property so they can be sold. Murzynski said the equipment has not been used since it was replaced by John Deere bat wing cutters. **Motion by Murzynski and second by Jones to declare a 2021 and a 2022 Bush Hog rotary cutter as surplus property. All in favor, motion carried.**

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

1. **SOA Report Update/Approval:** Ritchie noted Supervisor of Assessments Kendra Niehaus reported to the committee her department is spending 2-3 days per week in field work. Wooded acres are now being reassessed as they are sold, because wooded acres sold after 2007 are no longer assessable as farmland.
2. **Capital Improvement & Coal Fund Reports Update/Approval:** Based on reported provided by Treasurer Nikki Lohman, Ritchie reported a May coal royalty payment of \$98,671.17. Through May 2024, coal funds have earned \$214,658.14 in interest. Ritchie reported a Capital Improvement Fund balance of \$1,454,248.54 and a total coal balance of \$9,490,522.08.
3. **Commission Election Judges Update/Approval:** Ritchie noted County Clerk Leitheiser presented the committee a list of potential Election Judges as provided by the Republican and Democrat Party Chairmen for County Board approval. After the list is approved by the County Board, the County Clerk will publish a legal notice on July 11<sup>th</sup>, 2024 announcing the date, time and location for the Court Commission approval of the list. **Motion by Ritchie and second by Beck to approve the list of Election Judges as presented. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 21, pages 228-248).**
4. **Audit Presentation Update/Approval:** Ritchie said Treasurer Nikki Lohman reported the audit should be completed by July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

5. **FY 2025 Budget Process Update/Approval:** Ritchie said Department Heads should have budget forms this week, and the Treasurer is working with Bellwether on hearing dates. Two ambulance districts have requested levies substantially greater than 5% over last year's, which will require at least two Truth-In-Taxation hearings. The Treasurer and County Board Administration will work on a schedule for the hearings.
6. **State's Attorney Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) Update/Approval:** Ritchie reported the State of Illinois has made a 4.7% cost of living adjustment (COLA) to the State's Attorney salary, which will also result in changes to the other county office holder salaries determined by the State's Attorney's salary. **Motion by Ritchie and second by Beck to approve the State's Attorney COLA salary increase of 4.7%. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Ritchie and second by Beck to approve the Illinois Department of Revenue PTAX-451 Salary Adjustment for the Public Defender. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy of PTAX-451, see Resolution Book 21, pages 249-250). Motion by Ritchie and second by Beck to approve the Illinois Department of Revenue PTAX 451 Salary Adjustment for the Sheriff. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy of PTAX-451, see Resolution Book 21, pages 251-252).**
7. **Pre-Approved Vendor List Update/Approval:** County Clerk Leitheiser presented the committee with a revised Pre-Approved Vendors list, reflecting a vendor name change from Benefit Planning Consultants to Chard Snyder, and adding Direct Energy Business as the new power supplier. **Motion by Ritchie and second by Beck to approve two changes to the Pre-Approved Vendors list. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 21, pages 253-254).**
8. **Declare Supervisor of Assessments F-250 Surplus Update/Approval:** Ritchie said the Supervisor of Assessments' office no longer needs a 2000 Ford F-250 originally purchased by the Montgomery County Highway Department. County Board Administration will advertise the truck for sale by sealed bid. **Motion by Ritchie and second by Hughes to declare a 2000 Ford F-250 regular cab pickup truck as surplus property. All in favor, motion carried.**

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

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

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:** None

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:** None

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

**Next Bushue Meeting Update/Approval:** Chairman Donaldson noted the next meeting with our HR consultant Bushue will be at 10:15 a.m. on Thursday, July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2024 following the Coordinating Committee meeting. Office holders and department heads are invited to attend.

**SCHEDULE CHANGES:** None

**APPOINTMENTS:**

**Appointment of Bryan Fesser, Ed Goebel and Montgomery Elvidge to the Bois D' Arc King #3 Drainage District Board:** Motion by Young and second by Jones to appoint Bryan Fesser, Ed Goebel and Montgomery Elvidge to the Bois D' Arc King #3 Drainage District Board. All in favor, motion carried.

**PAY BILLS AND PAYROLL:**

Motion by Beason and second by Ritchie to pay all approved bills and payroll. All in favor, motion carried. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Voting yes: Beason, Beck, Bergen, Donaldson, Folkerts, Hughes, Jones, Loucks, Murzynski, Ritchie, Ruppert, Sneed, Whitworth and Young. All in favor, motion carried.

**ADJOURN:**

The next regular full board meeting will be on Tuesday, August 13th, 2024 at 5:30 p.m. in the County Board Room, Hillsboro, Illinois. Motion by Murzynski and second by Loucks to adjourn the Full Board Meeting. All in favor, motion carried. Meeting Adjourned at 6:22 p.m. Minutes respectfully recorded and submitted by Montgomery County Clerk and Recorder Sandy Leitheiser.