

Montgomery County Board Minutes

For Tuesday, August 13th, 2024 – 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, August 13th, 2024.

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, Doug Donaldson, Ken Folkerts, Jeremy Jones, David Loucks, Ethan Murzynski, Andy Ritchie, Chad Ruppert, Patty Whitworth and Evan Young

Members Absent: Bill Bergen, Mark Hughes, Bob Sneed

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

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

ROLL CALL VOTE Voting yes: Beason, Beck, Donaldson, Folkerts, Jones, Loucks, Murzynski, Ritchie, Ruppert, Whitworth and Young. **All in favor, motion carried.**

Approval of Minutes of Previous County Board Meeting:

Motion by Jones and second by Ritchie to approve the minutes of the previous regular county board meeting held on Tuesday, July 9th, 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. Daniels reminded the County Board the next electronic recycling drive has been set for Saturday, September 14th from 9 a.m. until 12 noon at the Montgomery County Highway Department.
- 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, report not submitted.
- 10. Maintenance Superintendent Report** – Phil Ernst, report submitted.
- 11. Probation Office Report** – Bane Ulrici, report submitted.
- 12. Public Defender’s Report** – Erin Mattson, report submitted.

13. **ROE – Monthly, Quarterly & Annual Reports** — Julie Wollerman, report submitted.
14. **Sheriff’s Report** – Rick Robbins, report submitted. Undersheriff Tyson Holshouser was present for questions.
15. **SOA Report** – Kendra Niehaus, report submitted.
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. Treasurer Lohman reported as of Monday, August 12th, 68% of property taxes had been collected.
18. **V.A.C. Report** – Cassandra Hampton, report submitted.

APPROVAL OF ITEMS ON THE CONSENT AGENDA:

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

LIAISON REPORTS:

- **708 Board** – Murzynski reported the board met Monday, Aug. 12th and reviewed funding applications.
- **CEFS Board** — Beason had nothing to report.
- **ETSB / 911 Board** – Bergen was absent.
- **Health Department** — Whitworth had nothing to report.
- **IL Association of County Officials** — Bergen was absent.
- **MCEDC** — Hughes was absent.
- **Planning Commission** — Ritchie had nothing to report.
- **Senior Citizens Board** — Folkerts said Chris Daniels is tabulating survey results. He stated the board is also looking for volunteers to help seniors with yard waste.
- **UCCI** – Ruppert had nothing to report.
- **U of I** – Beck had nothing to report.
- **WCDC** – Jones had nothing to report.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

COORDINATING COMMITTEE: Given by County Board Chairman Doug Donaldson:

1. **Information Systems Report Update/Approval:** Chairman Donaldson told the board IS Director Curt Watkins reported to the committee he has been working on switch upgrades, moving computers in the Circuit Clerk’s office, working on the court grant and on County Clerk’s office renovations. Donaldson stated Watkins is beginning the ARPA-funded video storage project and plans to use coal reserves reimbursed through the DCEO Energy Transition Grant to begin phone system upgrades.
2. **EMA Report Update/Approval:** Chairman Donaldson said Kevin Schott reported he plans to retire as of September 30th and thanked him for his service. The board expressed their gratitude with applause. **Motion by Young and second by Beck to accept the resignation of Kevin Schott as EMA Director effective at 11:59 p.m. Monday, September 30th. All in favor, motion carried.**
3. **West Central Development Council/Job Center Board/CEO Board Update/Approval:** Chairman Donaldson reported officers were seated at a meeting on Thursday, July 18th. The organization requested the Montgomery County Board adopt a

proclamation naming September as Workforce Development Month. **Motion by Donaldson and second by Jones to approve a proclamation recognizing September as Workforce Development Month in Montgomery County. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 21, page 255).**

4. **Nextlink Presentation Update/Approval:** Craig Hall of Nextlink, assisted by Jason Talley of Nextlink, reported the company has “made a tremendous amount of progress” in its mission to provide broadband internet to unserved and underserved areas of Montgomery County as a result of the federal grant this company received. Hall told board members the project is “way ahead of schedule” from its original 18-to-24-month prediction. He showed the board a map of wireless towers and said Nextlink will soon begin to test towers and hire installers. The company is still looking for some tower locations. A tower in Hillsboro will be fed by fiber and then relayed to other towers by fixed point-to-point wireless. Hall stated Nextlink’s minimum service will be 100/20 for \$49.99/month.

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

1. **Employee Health Insurance and Monthly HRA Report Update/Approval:** Committee Chairman Ruppert said his committee reviewed the monthly HRA report and heard from Assured Partners representative Tony Johnston regarding the status of the group health plan. Johnston stated during the 2023 policy year and so far in 2024, claims are running ahead of premiums. Because of these higher claims, Johnston told the county to expect up to a 35% renewal premium increase. When this new number becomes available in late August or September, Johnston said Assured Partners will begin final negotiations and begin bidding health insurance coverage.
2. **Animal Control Update/Approval:** Committee Chairman Ruppert said the included monthly Animal Control report was typical. He added the department is running over budget, and said board members can anticipate changes.
3. **Animal Control Policy Update/Approval:** Committee Chairman Ruppert said he is continuing to work with Animal Control after the department requested a \$370,000 budget for FY 2025 which would operate at a predicted \$265,000 deficit. A new budget is in the works with a predicted Animal Control deficit of \$28,000.
4. **Solar Ordinance Update/Approval:** Committee Chairman Ruppert reported the committee reviewed a document describing the wind and solar permit procedure developed by County Board Administration, the Supervisor of Assessments, County Clerk and Recorder, and independent engineer Jeremy Connor for inclusion in both ordinances. The procedure document describes steps in the county process from application through operating permit. **Motion by Ruppert and second by Beason to amend the county solar ordinance to include the permit procedure. All in favor, motion carried.**
5. **Wind Ordinance Update/Approval:** **Motion by Ruppert and second by Young to amend the county wind ordinance to include the permit procedure. All in favor, motion carried.**
6. **Plains Solar Update/Approval:** Committee Chairman Ruppert said after the Plains Solar public hearing that began on July 1st had been recessed to August 12th, both the applicant and the county expressed an interest in postponing resumption of the hearing.

He reported the committee rescheduled resumption of the Plains Solar Public Hearing until 6 p.m. Monday, November 4th. Ruppert said he had spoken with Rebecca Cheatham of Cypress Creek the previous day and they may consider adjusting the hearing schedule.

7. **Oil Sun Solar Update/Approval:** Committee Chairman Ruppert reported 22cc Inc. submitted a second solar application on Friday, August 2nd for Oil Sun Solar, a 10-Mw project on Oil Field Avenue in Raymond Township, and the \$25,000 application fee was paid on Friday, July 26th. He said this was the first application fee paid on the new fee schedule. The committee set a public hearing date for this project on Monday, August 26th, at 6:00 PM in the County Board room of the Historic Courthouse in Hillsboro, IL.
8. **Bushue HR Update/Approval:** During a meeting in July, Ruppert said Travis Bushue of Bushue HR presented a universal county employment application to be used by all or most county offices and posted on the county website. Applications completed online could be sent to all county officeholders. Committee Chairman Ruppert reported Bushue also presented an FMLA flowchart, discussed county vehicles, helped prepare an employee reprimand, and continues to work on the employee manual. **Motion by Ruppert and second by Whitworth to approve the universal employment application developed by Bushue HR. All in favor, motion carried.**
9. **DCEO Energy Transition Grant Update/Approval:** Committee Chairman Ruppert informed the board the final phase of the DCEO Energy Transition Grant Application was been submitted on July 30th, a day ahead of the deadline, and received by DCEO.
10. **DCEO Energy Transition Grant Small Business Start-Up Incentive Update/Approval:** After hearing from 10 of the applicants at his committee meeting, Ruppert said the committee reviewed and scored applications and made recommendations to award \$125,000 of the \$336,594.55 available grant funds. **Motion by Ruppert and second by Whitworth to award the following Small Biz grants: \$40,000 to Noko Sugar Rush in Nokomis; \$20,000 to Willow Lane in Litchfield; \$20,000 to Neon Café in Hillsboro; \$10,000 to The Revived Soul in Hillsboro; \$10,000 to Cosmo’s Place in Litchfield; \$7,500 to Majors Ink in Litchfield; \$7,500 to Que-One-Seven in Hillsboro; \$5,000 to Interurban Designs in Hillsboro; \$5,000 to Scout House in Hillsboro. ROLL CALL VOTE: Voting yes: Beason, Beck, Donaldson, Folkerts, Jones, Loucks, Murzynski, Ritchie, Ruppert, Whitworth and Young. All in favor, motion carried.**

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS COMMITTEE REPORT: Given by Committee member Russ Beason:

1. **Maintenance and Cleaning Issues and Report Update/Approval:** Beason reported estimates were received from Hillsboro Electric to replace bulbs with higher lumen LED lights with a 5-year warranty. The Courthouse Complex parking lights will be \$3,071.95 and the replacement of 10 lights at the jail with higher lumen LED lights with a 5-year warranty will cost \$6,744.50.
2. **Health Department Land Acquisition Update/Approval:** Beason told the County Board the committee heard from Health Department Administrator Hugh Satterlee regarding a request for some county-owned land behind the health department to build solar arrays. Satterlee shared a diagram of how the project would look. The committee will look into the request.

3. **Interior Door Project for County Clerk’s Office Update/Approval:** Beason said the committee learned the remodel project is moving along and both entrances to the office have been reopened. The glass for the counters still needs to be installed.
4. **County Board Room Tech Grant Update/Approval:** Beason said the technology upgrades to the board room should begin next month. Ameresco has been on site to evaluate the space and Hillsboro Electric has completed the electrical upgrades for the new equipment.
5. **Two-Year Plan Update/Approval:** Beason reported the committee will be working with Maintenance Director Phil Ernst on a two-year plan for Building & Grounds projects to present next month. The committee discussed cleaning the outside of the windows on the Historic Court and decided to wait until the roof is replaced.
6. **Elevator Contract Update/Approval:** The elevator maintenance contract will be addressed in November.

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

1. **UKA Virden Wind Road Use Agreement Update/Approval:** Committee Chairman Murzynski said Engineer Cody Greenwood shared a map of the proposed haul route for the UKA Virden Wind Project for committee members to review. The map was in the County Board packet, and Greenwood said UKA has begun testing road and anticipates upgrades will need to be made.
2. **Walshville Bypass Road Update/Approval:** Committee Chairman Murzynski said Engineer Greenwood attended the public information meeting regarding the Walshville Trail Improvement Project held on August 6th at Village Hall. There were 4 alternatives for the project prepared by WHKS Engineering shared with the public. Greenwood stated there were about 22 people in attendance and the meeting went well. Some written comments were received and Greenwood said the next step is to address those. Greenwood noted comments will be accepted through August 23rd, and a comment form is on the county website.
3. **Sale of Surplus Property Update/Approval:** Committee Chairman Murzynski reported two surplus mowers advertised for sale on a government surplus website did not meet the reserve. The 2022 mower had a reserve of \$15,000 and the high bid came in at \$13,200. The 2021 mower had a reserve of \$14,000 and the high bid came in at \$12,200. Greenwood said he has recently relisted the surplus property with a lower reserve amount.

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

1. **SOA Report Update/Approval:** Committee Chairman Ritchie said Supervisor of Assessments Kendra Niehaus reported to the committee she will no longer require structural improvement notifications for residential solar installation. She also told the committee she would like to change her budget request by transferring some of the funds in her salary line item to the line for her staff salaries.
2. **Capital Improvement & Coal Fund Reports Update/Approval:** Committee Chairman Ritchie noted a coal royalty payment of \$79,887.87 in June and a Capital Fund balance of

\$1,468,337.15 as of June 30th. Ritchie reported the Coal Fund totals as of June 30th were \$9,646,514 before a July coal royalty payment of \$111,127.43.

3. **Audit Presentation Update/Approval:** Committee Chairman Ritchie said according to Treasurer Nikki Lohman, the audit is finished and will be presented to the County Board in September. Lohman also informed the committee she would like to group grants in one grant fund next fiscal year, which will require a resolution to transfer funds.
4. **Convey Parcel 08-27-134-035 to Village of Coalton Update/Approval:** Committee Chairman Ritchie said Treasurer Lohman had prepared resolutions to transfer two Trustee parcels in Coalton, 08-27-310-012 and 08-27-134-035, to the Village of Coalton. **Motion by Ritchie and second by Folkerts to convey parcel 08-27-134-035 to the Village of Coalton. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 21, page 256).**
5. **Convey Parcel 08-27-310-012 to Village of Coalton Update/Approval:** **Motion by Ritchie and second by Folkerts to convey parcel 08-27-310-012 to the Village of Coalton. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 21, page 257).**
6. **ARPA Ordinance 2024-18 for Information Services Video Back Storage Update/Approval:** Committee Chairman Ritchie said the committee reviewed ARPA ordinances funding three previously approved projects. **Motion by Ritchie and second by Beck to approve an ordinance authorizing an amount not to exceed \$24,000 made available from ARPA funds for the purchase of Data Storage Monitoring for the IT Department. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 21, page 258).**
7. **ARPA Ordinance 2024-19 for Health Department Generators Update/Approval:** **Motion by Ritchie and second by Whitworth to approve an ordinance authorizing an amount not to exceed \$14,558.98 made available from ARPA funds for the purchase of Generators for the Public Health Department. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 21, page 259).**
8. **ARPA Ordinance 2024-20 for Health Department Panic Buttons Update/Approval:** **Motion by Ritchie and second by Beck to approve an ordinance authorizing an amount not to exceed \$6,623 made available from ARPA funds for the purchase of Panic Buttons for the Public Health Department. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 21, page 260).**
9. **Surplus Ford F-250 Bid Opening Update/Approval:** Committee Chairman Ritchie said the committee opened two bids for the surplus Ford F-250, the first bid was for \$251 and the second bid was for \$650. Both bidders were present at the committee bid-opening and the low bidder declined the option to raise his bid. **Motion by Ritchie and second by Whitworth to sell the surplus Ford F-250 to winning bidder Harry Jackson for \$650. All in favor, motion carried.**
10. **MCSO Dodge Durango Bid Opening Update/Approval:** Committee Chairman Ritchie said according to the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office, the lone bidder for a new Dodge Durango squad was Victory Lane in Carlinville for \$43,193. He stated the Montgomery County Health Department is providing funds to purchase and equip the vehicle, which will be available in a few weeks.

11. FY 2025 Budget Process Update/Approval: Committee Chairman Ritchie reported the committee discussed several remaining issues from the August 1st FY 2025 budget meeting conducted by Bellwether, most notably in Animal Control but also in the Highway Department, State’s Attorney, and Sheriff’s budgets. He said the committee will be ready to present a tentative FY 2025 budget at the September County Board meeting. Ritchie said at present, the predicted FY 2025 General Fund deficit is just over \$400,000. He set a special Finance & Budget Committee meeting for Thursday, August 22nd, 2024 at 8:30 AM to try to balance the budget.

12. Truth-In-Taxation Discussion Update/Approval: Committee Chairman Ritchie reminded the County Board the Nokomis-Witt Area Ambulance, Farmersville-Waggoner Area Ambulance, 708 Board and VAC have all requested levies requiring a truth-in-taxation hearing, and the tentative levy for county funds would also require a truth-in-taxation hearing. He said the county board must approve an estimated tax levy during the September meeting and then schedule and publish any required truth-in-taxation hearing notices according to statutory requirements. State’s Attorney Affrunti said the truth-in-taxation hearings for the two ambulance special service areas must be held in those respective taxing districts.

APPROVAL OF THE COMMITTEE REPORTS & MINUTES:

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None

CHAIRMAN’S REPORT:

1. Chairman Donaldson reported on a meeting held on Monday, August 12th, 2024 with a developer who is working on bringing what they are calling a “total sports and entertainment venue” to Montgomery County. He said he hopes to have more details to report soon.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. Chairman Donaldson reminded the board the Oil Sun 22c solar project public hearing has been scheduled for Monday, August 26th at 6:00 PM at the Historic Courthouse.
2. Chairman Donaldson noted the BLH Fall Electronics Recycling is set for Saturday, September 14th, 2024 from 9 a.m. - 12 noon at the Highway Department in Taylor Springs.

SCHEDULE CHANGES:

1. Chairman Donaldson reminded the board next month’s Development & Personnel Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, September 5th instead of Monday, September 2nd. The meeting time remains unchanged at 5:00 p.m.
2. Chairman Donaldson noted the resumption of the Plains Solar public hearing has been rescheduled for Monday, November 4th at 6 p.m. at the Historic Courthouse.

APPOINTMENTS: None

PAY BILLS AND PAYROLL:

Motion by Beason and second by Ruppert to pay all approved bills and Payroll. All in favor, motion carried. ROLL CALL VOTE Beason, Beck, Donaldson, Folkerts, Jones, Loucks, Murzynski, Ritchie, Ruppert, Whitworth and Young. All in favor, motion carried.

ADJOURN:

The next regular full board meeting will be on Tuesday, September 10th, 2024 at 5:30 p.m. in the County Board Room, Hillsboro, Illinois. Motion by Loucks and second by Beck to adjourn the Full Board Meeting. All in favor, motion carried. Meeting Adjourned at 7:02 p.m. Minutes respectfully recorded and submitted by Montgomery County Clerk and Recorder Sandy Leitheiser.