

Montgomery County Board Minutes **For Tuesday, September 9, 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, September 9, 2025. The meeting was called to order by County Board Chairman Doug Donaldson at 5:30 PM.

Roll call was taken – 12 members present, 2 members absent.

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

Members Absent: Rob Corso, Keith Hancock

Pledge of Allegiance to the flag was led by Finance & Budget Committee Chairman Ritchie.

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

Approval of Minutes of Previous County Board Meeting: **Motion by Hughes and second by Whitworth to approve the minutes of the previous regular county board meeting held on Tuesday, August 12, 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.
3. **Coroner's Report** – Randy Leetham was present for questions.
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 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** – Bane Ulrici was not present.
11. **Public Defender's Report** – Erin Mattson was not present.
12. **ROE** – Julie Wollerman was not present.
13. **Sheriff's Report** – Tyson Holshouser was present for questions.
14. **SOA Report** – Chief Deputy Tysha Mullen 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 and reported she will be mailing delinquent property tax notices next week, and the tax sale is scheduled for the last Monday in October, 2025.
17. **VAC Report**- Cassandra Hampton was present for questions.

APPROVAL OF ITEMS ON THE CONSENT AGENDA:

Motion by Jones and second by Young 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 on Monday, Sept. 8, 2025 to begin the grant hearing process.
- **ETSB / 911 Board** – Bergen had nothing to report.
- **Health Department** – Whitworth reported more mosquitoes are testing positive for West Nile virus, particularly in the Nokomis area; and she added flu shots should be arriving soon.
- **IL Association of County Officials** – Hancock was not present.
- **MCEDC** – Daniels reported a meeting will be scheduled with new Executive Director Kaitlyn Fath. Chairman Donaldson recognized Fath, who introduced herself to the board.
- **Planning Commission** – Ritchie had nothing to report.
- **Senior Citizens Board** – Daniels reported collecting quotes for Phase II DCEO Energy Transition Grant projects.
- **UCCI** – Corso was not present.
- **U of I** – Ruppert had nothing to report.
- **WCDC** – Jones reported a budget increase to \$1.5 million, distributed pamphlets explaining WCDC programs, and he added the Montgomery County unemployment rate is now down a percentage point to 3.7 percent.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

COORDINATING COMMITTEE: Given by County Board Chairman Doug Donaldson:

1. **Information Systems Report Update/Approval:** Donaldson said IS Director Curt Watkins reported working on court grant items with some supply issues, performing server upgrades, updating DevNet sketching software, working on fire/panic alarm updates, planning the phone system upgrade, working on remote access for township assessors, and nearing completion of the ArcPro upgrade. Donaldson said he reported phishing campaigns remain up, and Watkins will soon begin planning the GIS website change.
2. **EMA/EPA Report Update/Approval:** Donaldson said Director Dan Hough reported a visit from the acting Illinois EPA Director on Tuesday, Aug. 26, 2025 and said Montgomery County, Illinois was asked to be a test site for new forms and processes. He also reviewed his monthly EMA activity report.
3. **Ad Hoc Committee to Address SB3455 Wooded Acreage Assessments Update/Approval:** Donaldson said during the Aug. 19, 2025, committee meeting the ad hoc committee recommended Best Practices for the Supervisor of Assessments office. The committee will meet again on Tuesday, Sept. 23, 2025, to potentially recommend legislative changes to the state. **Motion by Beason and second by Ritchie to recommend the list of Best Practices as presented to the Montgomery County Supervisor of Assessments office. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 22, pages 278-281).**
4. **Cell Phone Policy Update/Approval:** Donaldson noted the committee discussed reviewing which county employees need a county cell phone.

5. **Workforce Development Month Proclamation Update/Approval:** Donaldson read a proclamation denoting September as Workforce Development Month in Montgomery County. **Motion by Donaldson and second by Beason to adopt the Workforce Development Month Proclamation. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 22, page 282).**

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

1. **Animal Control Update/Approval:** Ruppert reviewed Animal Control Warden Tricia Papin's report, highlighting 21 calls over the past month and only eight dogs at the Animal Control Facility.
2. **Animal Control Policy & Procedure Manual Update/Approval:** Ruppert said the committee will consider making a recommendation next month after Animal Control Warden Papin has an opportunity to review the documents.
3. **UKA Virden Wind Update/Approval:** Ruppert said Jack Butler and Lindsey Workman of UKA informed the committee about the 100 MW Virden Wind project permitted in 2024 and granted a three-month extension that expires at the end of September, 2025. Butler said UKA had originally envisioned three wind projects: the 100 MW Virden Wind project already permitted, a 150 MW Grand Prairie Wind project, and a 100 MW Pawnee Wind project. He said due to subsurface risks with the permitted Virden Wind turbine locations, continued supply chain and subsequent financial risks, UKA has determined Virden Wind and Grand Prairie Wind are no longer feasible and will let the siting permit expire at the end of September, 2025. Instead, UKA intends to combine the Virden Wind and Grand Prairie proposed footprints and develop a new 100 MW Pawnee Wind project; and the company envisions they will apply for siting approval in 2027 or 2028 with the project to be constructed between 2029 and 2031.
4. **Montgomery IL Solar 1 (Route 16) Siting Permit Update/Approval:** Ruppert described the proposed 4.99 MW community solar project just east of Litchfield on the north side of Route 16, and introduced Chase Wittich of Summit Ridge Energy who was present at the meeting. Ruppert said because of the location of the project, the committee recommended no vegetative screening. He read five siting conditions, including a condition adding a fully executed Community Benefits Agreement. **Motion by Ruppert and second by Whitworth to approve siting for Montgomery IL Solar 1 on parcels 10-36-300-013 and 15-02-200-029 with five conditions. All in favor, motion carried.**
5. **DCEO Energy Transition Grant Update/Approval:** Ruppert reported projects continue in Phase I and Phase II, and the county is still awaiting an award amount for Phase III.
6. **Small Biz Grant Update/Approval:** Ruppert said the committee reviewed a spreadsheet of grant recipients showing most businesses are successfully operating. Most of the rest of the businesses continue to progress toward an opening date, and only two businesses have shown no signs of progress.
7. **Montgomery First Community Engagement Update/Approval:** Ruppert noted the committee would like the opportunity to compare the county draft of this document to one submitted by Summit Ridge Energy and discuss both drafts next month.

8. **2026 County Holiday Schedule Update/Approval:** Ruppert said the committee reviewed the schedule of holidays for 2026, which included one additional holiday for General Election Day. Because the County Board had added Christmas Eve as a holiday in 2025 with the absence of an Election Day holiday, the committee discussed whether General Election Day should be added. He said the committee discussed eliminating a different holiday from the 2026 schedule, such as Juneteenth. State's Attorney Andrew Affrunti noted Christmas Eve was added as a county holiday in 2025 at the request of the Chief Judge's office and stated the Chief Judge could choose to make Juneteenth a court holiday. **Motion by Ruppert and second by Hughes to approve the 2026 county holiday schedule adding General Election Day and eliminates Juneteenth. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 22, page 283).**

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

1. **Maintenance Report Update/Approval:** Hughes said Maintenance Director Phil Ernst reviewed the 39 items on his report with the committee.
2. **Courtroom Three Split Unit Update/Approval:** Hughes said after Maintenance Director Ernst performed repair on the air handler, the system has maintained a 71-degree temperature in Courtroom Three in the Courthouse Complex, so the split unit may not be necessary. He said the committee may reconsider adding a split unit as a back-up using grant funds.
3. **Jaytech Water Solutions Proposal Update/Approval:** Hughes reviewed proposals presented last month from Jaytech Water Solutions of Maryland Heights, MO, for a one-time closed loop treatment of the Montgomery County Courts Complex HVAC system and annual lab testing. **Motion by Hughes and second by Beason to accept proposals from Jaytech Water Solutions of Maryland Heights, MO, for \$4,549.22 for closed loop treatment of the Montgomery County Courts Complex HVAC system, and for \$882.90 for annual lab testing. All in favor, motion carried.**
4. **NAGS Arches Rail Trail Request Update/Approval:** Hughes said the Montgomery County Highway Department has analyzed and will remediate the issue.
5. **Window Cleaning Proposal Update/Approval:** **Motion by Hughes and second by Beck to accept proposals from Dominic Ellinger in Litchfield to clean windows at the Historic Courthouse for \$2,205 and the Courts Complex for \$2,750. All in favor, motion carried.**
6. **Silicon Ranch Solar Update/Approval:** Hughes said the committee reviewed the purchase option agreement. Hughes said he will discuss the proposal with Silicon Ranch Solar and report back next month.

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

1. **Resolution 2025-8 appropriating funds for 100% County culvert replacement on Oconee Road Update/Approval:** Murzynski stated the committee reviewed the resolution and map for 100% County culvert replacement on Oconee Road in Audubon Township. The total cost of the project is estimated at \$25,000 with Montgomery County responsible for the entire cost from the County Aid to Bridge Fund. **Motion by Murzynski and second by Bergen to approve Resolution 2025-8 to appropriate funds from the County Aid to Bridge Fund to pay in full an estimated \$25,000 to**

replace a culvert on Oconee Road. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 22, pages 284-285).

2. **NAGS Arches Rail Trail Update/Approval:** Murzynski said the committee discussed a plan to address deep rutting and washout on the Arches Rail Trail to be implemented later this fall. Engineer Greenwood said the remediation will likely include cutting brush to allow equipment access, cutting ditches, and crowning the trail.
3. **Nokomis Rd. (CH 7) Extension Project Update/Approval:** Murzynski said the committee reviewed a proposal allowing the existing county road running through the City of Nokomis on East Union Street to be transferred to the City of Nokomis. Additionally, the existing county road, County Road 2300 E, would be transferred from the jurisdiction of Nokomis Township to Montgomery County. Chairman Donaldson informed members the goals of the transfer are to ensure the safety of the residents and nearby school from heavy equipment. There had been a prior arrangement reached in 1979 that allowed for this transfer; however, due to the proper paperwork not being filed with the state, the prior arrangement is no longer valid. Donaldson said he recently attended a Nokomis City Council meeting to discuss the plan and was accompanied by Committee Chairman Murzynski, County Board member Ruppert and Engineer Cody Greenwood. Murzynski said the committee will continue to research the plan and will continue to communicate with the city and township.
4. **Vacating Streets and Alleys in Zanesville Update/Approval:** Murzynski said the committee reviewed a road vacation plat for Zanesville (originally Leesburg), a never-developed village in Zanesville Township. Due to the proper paperwork not yet being received, the committee will make a recommendation next month.
5. **Heavy Equipment Shed Update/Approval:** Murzynski deferred to Engineer Greenwood, who reported industrial sized overhead garage doors will arrive Sept. 22, 2025. Additionally, he said rock is being laid and tapped down in the parking lot and the greenspace is receiving fresh top soil and is being seeded.

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

1. **SOA Office Update/Approval:** Ritchie reviewed Chief Deputy Tysha Mullen's report, noting 119 Certificates of Error completed for tax year 2024. IT has provided remote access for the Property Evaluation & Tax Advisor consultants who have completed most of the field work. The office is still expecting work to be provided to them from two township assessors, and Mullen continues to complete classes with the goal of passing the SOA exam by the end of the year.
2. **Capital Improvement & Coal Fund Reports Update/Approval:** Ritchie noted the coal royalty payment was \$100,771.04 in July, resulting in a total coal fund balance of \$10,344,801.64.
3. **Trustee Sale Parcel 13-06-179-001 Update/Approval:** Ritchie reported James VanOstran of Witt appeared before the committee questioning the trustee sale of parcel 13-06-179-001 in the City of Witt to a bidder from California for \$8,000. VanOstran expressed doubts that if the sale proceeds, the buyer will clean up the property. Transfer of the property was held for review.

4. **Transfer 12 Parcels from Trustee Sale Update/Approval:** Ritchie said the committee reviewed the parcels, and after discussion, decided to recommend transferring all of the parcels except 13-06-179-001 to allow more time to research VanOstran's concerns. **Motion by Ritchie and second by Young to transfer parcels 08-15-452-001 and 08-15-452-002 in Nokomis Township to Chausse Family LLC. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Ritchie and second by Young to transfer parcel 13-06-231-011 in Witt Township to the City of Witt. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Ritchie and second by Young to transfer parcel 13-06-231-014 in Witt Township to the City of Witt. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Ritchie and second by Whitworth to transfer parcel 17-07-129-023 in East Fork Township to PJ Properties USA LLC. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Ritchie and second by Young to transfer parcel 08-22-427-003 in Nokomis Township to Andrew Graden. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Ritchie and second by Young to transfer parcel 08-22-427-007 in Nokomis Township to Andrew Graden. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Ritchie and second by Beck to transfer parcel 10-33-477-016 in North Litchfield Township to Piggy Bank Investment Properties, LLC. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Ritchie and second by Young to transfer parcel 12-22-437-001 in Irving Township to the Village of Irving. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Ritchie and second by Hughes to transfer parcel 12-22-455-003 in Irving Township to Piggy Bank Investment Properties, LLC. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Ritchie and second by Jones to transfer parcel 13-06-381-003 in Witt Township to Rocky Bay, LLC. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Ritchie and second by Ruppert to transfer parcel 17-35-360-004 in East Fork Township to Stone Way LLC, Valeria Espinoza. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Ritchie and second by Daniels to transfer parcel 20-22-383-034 in Grisham Township to Piggy Bank Investment Properties, LLC. All in favor, motion carried. (For copies of all Resolution transfers, see Resolution Book 22, pages 286-297).**
5. **Circuit Clerk Fee Resolution Update/Approval:** Ritchie said according to Circuit Clerk Daniel Robbins, language in the resolution had changed, but not fees. State's Attorney Andrew Affrunti indicated he had reviewed and approved the recommended language changes. **Motion by Ritchie and second by Beason to approve the updated Circuit Clerk Fee Resolution. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy of Resolution, see Resolution Book 22, pages 298-311).**
6. **FY2026 Tentative Budget Update/Approval:** Ritchie said Treasurer Nikki Lohman provided a working tentative FY2026 budget predicting a General Fund surplus of \$71,805.96. **Motion by Ritchie and second by Jones to place the tentative FY2026 budget on display for public review. All in favor, motion carried.**
7. **FY2026 Estimated Tax Levy Update/Approval:** Ritchie reported Mandy Myers of the Raymond-Harvel Area Ambulance Service came to the committee with a handout detailing her board's request for a tax levy of \$149,000 representing a 67.9% increase over last year. VAC Superintendent Cassandra Hampton described to the committee her board's request for a levy of \$127,997 representing a 13.17% increase over last year. Both will require a Truth in Taxation public hearing. Treasurer Nikki Lohman reviewed the county levy, and the committee recommended reducing the IMRF levy by \$132,358. **Motion by Ritchie and second by Whitworth to approve an estimated FY2026 Montgomery County Tax Levy of \$5,081,785 which would result in a 4.999%**

increase from FY2025. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Ritchie and second by Jones to approve an estimated FY2026 Veterans Assistance Commission Tax Levy of \$127,997 which would result in a 13.1756% increase from FY2025 and require a Truth in Taxation Public Hearing. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Ritchie and second by Beck to approve an estimated FY2026 Raymond-Harvel Area Ambulance Tax Levy of \$149,000 which would result in a 67.9029% increase from FY2025 and require a Truth in Taxation Public Hearing. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Ritchie and second by Young to approve an estimated FY2026 Nokomis-Witt Area Ambulance Tax Levy of \$438,943 which would result in a 4.999% increase from FY2025. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Ritchie and second by Jones to approve an estimated FY2026 Farmersville-Waggoner Area Ambulance Tax Levy of \$119,700 which would result in a 4.8130% increase from FY2025. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Ritchie and second by Hughes to approve an estimated FY2026 Hillsboro Area Ambulance Tax Levy of \$300,000 which would result in a 0.0006% decrease from FY2025. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Ritchie and second by Daniels to approve an estimated FY2026 Community Mental Health 708 Tax Levy of \$992,410 which would result in a 4.9687% increase from FY2025. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Ritchie and second by Daniels to approve an estimated FY2026 Senior Social Services Tax Levy of \$120,794 which would result in a 0.8386% increase from FY2025. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Ritchie and second by Ruppert to approve an estimated FY2026 Extension Tax Levy of \$157,000 which would result in a 0.0293% decrease from FY2025. All in favor, motion carried. (For copies of levies, see Resolution Book 22, pages 312-320).

APPROVAL OF THE COMMITTEE REPORTS & MINUTES:

Motion by Murzynski and second by Daniels to approve the committee reports and minutes. All in favor, motion carried.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & SCHEDULE CHANGES:

1. The fall Electronics Recycling Drive will be Saturday, Sept. 13, 2025, from 9 a.m. to 12 noon at the former Montgomery County Highway Department at 1215 Seymour Avenue in Hillsboro.
2. Truth In Taxation public hearings are scheduled for Wednesday, Sept. 24, 2025, at the Raymond Ambulance Garage beginning at 6:00 p.m. for the Raymond-Harvel Area Ambulance Service and at 6:30 p.m. for the VAC.

APPOINTMENTS:

1. **Tyson Holshouser to the Montgomery County Board of Health Update/Approval:** Motion by Donaldson and second by Whitworth to appoint Tyson Holshouser to the Montgomery County Board of Health. All in favor, motion carried.
2. **Phil Speiser to the Mutual Drainage District No. 1 of Irving, Witt, Nokomis and Rountree Update/Approval:** Motion by Donaldson and second by Young to appoint Phil Speiser to the Mutual Drainage District No. 1 of Irving, Witt, Nokomis, and Rountree through September 2028. All in favor, motion carried.

PAY BILLS AND PAYROLL:

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Motion by Beason and second by Whitworth to enter executive session at 6:33 p.m. to discuss pending litigation. ROLL CALL VOTE: Voting yes: Beason, Beck, Bergen, Daniels, Donaldson, Hughes, Jones, Murzynski, Ritchie, Ruppert, Whitworth, Young. All in favor, motion carried.
Motion by Beason and second by Whitworth to return to open session at 6:53 p.m. All in favor, motion carried.

ADJOURN:

The next regular full board meeting will be on Tuesday, October 14, 2025 at 5:30 p.m. in the County Board Room, Hillsboro, Illinois. Motion by Hughes and second by Jones 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.