

Montgomery County Board

Property Tax Ad Hoc Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Conference Room, 2nd Floor, Historic Courthouse
#1 Courthouse Square, Hillsboro, IL 62049

6:00 p.m. Tuesday, November 18, 2025

Members Present: Russ Beason, Chris Daniels, Andy Ritchie, Chad Ruppert, Jesse Boehler, John Lentz

Members Absent: Vince Reincke, Doug Donaldson

Others Present: Mike Plunkett & Lucas Nowlan of County Board Administration, Supervisor of Assessments Tysha Mullen, South Litchfield Township Assessor Tom Baker, Stan Jenkins & Gary Twist of Property Evaluations & Tax Advisors, Illinois Realtors Government Affairs Director Ron Deedrick

1. Pledge of Allegiance: was led by Committee Chair Beason.
2. Public Comments: None
3. Supervisor of Assessments Office Update/Approval: Supervisor of Assessments Tysha Mullen announced beginning Jan. 1, 2026, wooded acreage would be reclassified upon ownership transfer. She added her office will maintain the 60/40 timber/farm split, and in response to questions, affirmed establishment of a trust doesn't necessarily constitute ownership change.
4. Final Illinois Best Practices Recommendations Update/Approval: The committee reviewed previously-discussed recommendations to the State of Illinois for the study to evaluate the property tax system required by Public Act 103-1002 and added two more:
 - *Regarding the local and state appeal process, the Ad Hoc Committee recommends legal notice publication of the process is included with the required annual assessment change publication and quadrennial publication.*
 - *Because variability in assessments hampers economic development, the Ad Hoc Committee recommends a statewide assessment process that is less reliant on market values.*
 - *Because in rural areas increases in assessed value are usually driven more by market values rather than economic development, the Ad Hoc Committee recommends required Truth in Taxation public hearings when the percentage levy increase exceeds the percentage of assessed value increase from new construction.*
 - *The State of Illinois should reexamine the requirements for unit of local government to extend and increase debt ceilings.*
 - *The State of Illinois should statutorily lessen the reliance of education funding on local property tax levies.*

Motion by Ruppert and second by Boehler to make five recommendations to the State of Illinois for the study to evaluate the property tax system as required by Public Act 103-1002. All in favor, motion carried.

Motion to adjourn by Ruppert and second by Boehler. All in favor, motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 6:47 p.m. The summaries of minutes were respectfully submitted by acting secretary Mike Plunkett, as Deputized by Montgomery County Clerk/Recorder Sandy Leitheiser.

Montgomery County Board
Coordinating Committee Meeting Minutes
County Board Room, 2nd Floor, Historic Courthouse
#1 Courthouse Sq. Hillsboro, IL 62049

8:30 a.m. Wednesday, November 26, 2025

Members Present: Doug Donaldson, Ethan Murzynski, Andy Ritchie, Chad Ruppert, Dr. Patty Whitworth

Members Absent: Mark Hughes,

Others Present: Mike Plunkett & Lucas Nowlan of County Board Administration, County Clerk Sandy Leitheiser, Engineer Cody Greenwood, IS Director Curt Watkins, Treasurer Nikki Lohman, EMA/EPA Director Dan Hough

Pledge of Allegiance: was led by Chairman Donaldson.

Public Comments: None

Coordinating Committee: Doug Donaldson, Board Chairman:

1. Information Systems Report Update/Approval: IS Director Curt Watkins reported responding to a power outage earlier in the day, prohibiting him from compiling a report. He said he is proud of the work his department has accomplished in the past 15 years, during which time the department has grown beyond expectations. Chairman Donaldson pledge support for the IS Department.
2. Privacy Notice Policy Update/Approval: Watkins will review the draft policy provided by Bushue HR.
3. EMA/EPA Report Update/Approval: EMA/EPA Director Hough described a hazardous material emergency plan grant agreement, which was signed by Chairman Donaldson before the meeting.
4. Ad Hoc Committee to Address SB3455 Wooded Acreage Assessments Update/Approval: The committee reviewed five recommendations for the study to evaluate the property tax system required by Public Act 103-1002, which will be on the board agenda for approval.
5. Farm Bureau Office Space Update/Approval: The committee reviewed an email from Montgomery County Farm Bureau Manager Katie Wilson asking if the county had any interest in leasing space that will be vacated by Lincoln Land Community College. No need was evident.
6. Mayor's Meeting Date Update/Approval: Chairman Donaldson tentatively scheduled a meeting for Wednesday, Jan. 28, 2026, at 5 p.m.
7. Other Business: Chairman Donaldson asked for a FOIA employee discussion to be added to the next agenda, and wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

Development & Personnel Committee: Chad Ruppert, Chairman:

1. MCEDC Update/Approval: Kaitlyn Fath will give an update.
2. Animal Control Update/Approval: Tricia Papin will give an update.
3. Circuit Clerk Local 148 Contract Update/Approval: The committee will review the agreement signed by the union.
4. SOA Local 1084 Contract Update/Approval: Committee Chair Ruppert anticipates recommending an agreement.
5. DCEO Energy Transition Grant Update/Approval: The committee will review and discuss.
6. Energy Omnibus Legislation Update/Approval: The committee will review and discuss.
7. Montgomery First Community Engagement Update/Approval: The committee will review and discuss.
8. County Starting Salary Update/Approval: The committee will review and discuss Bushue HR's recommendation.
9. Training Reimbursement Policy Update/Approval: The committee will review and discuss Bushue HR's recommendation.

10. Other Business: None.

Buildings and Grounds: Doug Donaldson, Board Chairman:

1. Maintenance Report Update/Approval: The committee will review and discuss.
2. EV Charging Station Request Update/Approval: Committee Chair Hughes had asked the item to be removed from the agenda.
3. DCEO County Board Room Grant Update/Approval: The committee will review and discuss proposals.
4. County Farm Lease Update/Approval: The committee will review and make a recommendation.
5. Other Business: Chairman Donaldson asked property for sale on North Main Street to be added to the agenda.

Roads and Bridges Committee: Ethan Murzynski, Chairman:

1. County MFT Resolution Update/Approval: The committee will review and discuss.
2. Other Business: Committee Chair Murzynski reported other agenda items will include the new building, Nokomis Road extension, bridge updates, and Leesburg vacation.

Finance and Budget Committee: Andy Ritchie, Chairman:

1. SOA Office Update/Approval: The committee will review and discuss.
2. Capital Improvement & Coal Fund Reports Update/Approval: The committee will review and discuss.
3. Montgomery County Fair Board Request Update/Approval: A request for funds to complete electrical work is anticipated.
4. 2026 IRS Mileage Rate Update/Approval: The committee will review and discuss after IRS updates its rate.
5. Pre-Approved Payment List Update/Approval: The committee will review recommendations made by County Clerk Leitheiser.
6. Coal Fund Voucher Process Update/Approval: The committee will review and recommend a process for vouchering budgeted coal funds. The committee also discussed the disposition of remaining FY2025 vouchers presented for payment.
7. Other Business: None.

Motion to adjourn by Ruppert and second by Murzynski. All in favor, motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 9:51 a.m. The summaries of minutes were respectfully submitted by acting secretary Mike Plunkett, as deputized by Montgomery County Clerk/Recorder Sandy Leitheiser.

Montgomery County Board

Development & Personnel Committee Meeting Minutes

County Board Room, 2nd Floor, Historic Courthouse
#1 Courthouse Sq. Hillsboro, IL 62049

5:00 p.m. Monday, December 1, 2025

Members Present: Chad Ruppert, Bill Bergen, Chris Daniels

Members Absent: Jeremy Jones, Russell Beason, Doug Donaldson

Others Present: County Board Administrator Mike Plunkett, County Clerk Sandy Leitheiser, Animal Control Warden Tricia Papin, Circuit Clerk Daniel Robbins, Matt Blankenship and Mike Young of Local 1084.

1. Pledge of Allegiance: was led by Committee Chair Ruppert.
2. Public Comment: None
3. MCEDC Update/Approval: Kaitlyn Fath was not present.
4. Animal Control Update/Approval: Animal Control Warden Tricia Papin reported 11 dogs, 2 pups, 4 cats, and 6 kittens at the facility. She and her staff responded to 25 calls in November. The committee reviewed and discussed two estimates for DCEO grant work at the facility, and asked Animal Control to solicit three separate proposals: one for the enclosure, one for the eye-wash station, and one for fencing.
5. Circuit Clerk Local 148 Contract Update/Approval: The committee reviewed the signed four-year contract with Circuit Clerk employees, calling for wage increases of 5.5% in FY2026, 5% in FY2027, 5% in FY2028, and 5% in FY2029, along with an entry level salary of \$17/hour. **Motion by Daniels and second by Bergen to recommend approval of the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Circuit Clerk of Montgomery County and the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 148, effective Dec. 1, 2025 through Nov. 30, 2029. All in favor, motion carried.**
6. SOA Local 1084 Contract Update/Approval: **Motion by Daniels and second by Bergen to enter closed session at 6:11 p.m. for personnel. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Daniels and second by Bergen to re-enter open session at 6:30 p.m. All in favor, motion carried.** The committee discussed salary and starting wage issues for a three-year contract with Matt Blankenship and Mike Young of Local 1084. The union will discuss the county offer with members.
7. DCEO Energy Transition Grant Update/Approval: The committee reviewed and discussed items that will be included on the Award #3 DCEO Energy Transition Grant totaling the award amount of \$1,092,450.34. Dan Rogers of First Due Consulting will have the grant application completed by the Dec. 19 deadline.
8. Energy Omnibus Legislation Update/Approval: State legislation passed by both the Illinois House and Senate that would require changes in the county wind and solar ordinances awaits the Governor's signature. The legislation also lays the framework for battery storage regulation and assessment.
9. Montgomery First Community Engagement Update/Approval: The committee has an agreement in principle with Summit Ridge, but would like to wait until the developer or contractor has made contact with local labor before signing an agreement.

10. County Starting Salary Update/Approval: The committee reviewed starting salary language suggested by Bushue HR that would institute pay grades for county positions. The committee will continue to work on the proposal.
11. Training Reimbursement Policy Update/Approval: The committee reviewed a Training Repayment Agreement policy drafted by Bushue HR that would require employees to reimburse for county out-of-pocket training expenses if the employee resigns before completing three years of employment. **Motion by Daniels and second by Bergen to recommend the Montgomery County Training Repayment Agreement. All in favor, motion carried.**
12. Other Business: The committee discussed a proposal from Hurst-Rosche for review of construction documents for Montgomery County Solar on Route 16 east of Litchfield for a not-to-exceed fee of \$3,500. Committee Chair Ruppert will ask for approval at the full board meeting.

Motion to pay the bills by Daniels and second by Bergen. All in favor, motion carried.

Motion to Adjourn by Bergen and second by Daniels. All in favor, motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 6:39 p.m. The summaries of minutes were respectfully submitted by acting secretary Mike Plunkett, as deputized by Montgomery County Clerk/Recorder Sandy Leitheiser.

Montgomery County Board Buildings & Grounds Committee Meeting Minutes

County Board Room, 2nd Floor, Historic Courthouse

#1 Courthouse Sq. Hillsboro, IL 62049

8:30 a.m. Tuesday, December 2, 2025

Members Present: Mark Hughes, Connie Beck, Russell Beason, Keith Hancock, Evan Young

Members Absent: Doug Donaldson

Others Present: Mike Plunkett and Lucas Nowlan of County Board Admin, Circuit Clerk Daniel Robbins, Maintenance Director Phil Ernst, Bane Ulrici from the Probation Office

1. Pledge of Allegiance: was led by Mark Hughes.
2. Public Comments: None
3. Maintenance Report Update/Approval: Maintenance Director Phil Ernst reviewed the 49 items on his report, including Bondurant Plumbing replacing a broken drainage pipe on the west side of the Historic Courthouse. This should relieve the continuous flooding in the County Clerk's record storage in the basement of the Historic Courthouse. Ellinger Window Cleaners finished cleaning the windows of the Courthouse Complex. Central Roofing repaired the gutters on the roof of Historic Court House's porch. The Courthouse Complex's three elevators were inspected on Dec. 1. Ernst reported his department completed 27 work orders during the past month.
4. DCEO County Board Room Grant Update/Approval: Mike Plunkett of the County Board Admin presented the committee with Double E Upholstery's quote of \$4,023.85 to fabricate cushions for the bench style seating in the back of the County Board Room. The committee reviewed the proposed elements of the cushions, including fabric samples. **Motion by Beason and second by Hancock to recommend Double E Upholstery's quote of \$4,023.85 to fabricate cushions for the bench style seating in the back of the County Board Room. All in favor, motion carried.**
5. County Farm Lease Update/Approval: Plunkett updated the lease to reflect the Committee's wishes to have rent payments due twice each year; previously the payment was once a year. The committee agreed to begin advertising this week, and will open bids at the Buildings and Grounds Committee meeting at 8:30 a.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 3, 2025.
6. 127 N. Main Street Property Update/Approval: 127 North Main Street, currently RehabEdge, was recently put on the market. Bane Ulrici of the Probation Office presented her proposal for the county to buy the 127 North Main street property for use by the Probation Office. Ulrici expressed that the probation office's services are expanding and now shares space with EMA in the basement of the Courthouse Complex. Probation needs a space where they can continue expanding services related to mental health and drug court. The office is also in need of a secure space where they can ensure confidentiality. Although concern was raised about the price of upkeep and furnishing a new building, Ulrici explained that the grant funds they currently receive may relieve some of the cost. Hughes and Circuit Clerk Daniel Robbins will develop a proposal for the committee to review next month.
7. Other Business: None

Motion to pay the bills by Beck and second by Hancock. All in favor, motion carried.

Motion to Adjourn by Beason and second by Beck. All in favor, motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 9:05 a.m. The summaries of minutes were respectfully submitted by acting secretary Mike Plunkett, as Deputized by Montgomery County Clerk/Recorder Sandy Leitheiser.

Montgomery County Board

Roads & Bridges Committee Meeting Minutes

Conference Room, County Highway Dept.
11159 IL Rte 185, Hillsboro, IL 62049

Date: Wednesday, December 3, 2025

Time: 8:30 AM – County Highway Department

Members present: Ethan Murzynski, Bill Bergen, Patty Whitworth, Chad Ruppert, Keith Hancock, Rob Corso, Doug Donaldson

Members Absent: None

Other Present: Lucas Nowlan of County Board Admin, County Engineer Cody Greenwood, Assistant Engineer Dustin Sefton

1. **Public Comments:** None
2. **Irresponsible Contractor on Township Bridge Projects Update/Approval:** Engineer Cody Greenwood presented a list of past and continuing issues observed with Yamnitz & Associates that have affected project performance, compliance, and overall trust. This includes manipulating materials to give the appearance they were installed properly, when in reality only minimal quantities were used. Additionally, the contractor lacks appropriate equipment, refuses to hire local labor, and traffic control is maintained only when given official notification. The committee discussed possible ways to avoid this problem moving forward, including not accepting any future bids from Yamnitz & Associates.
3. **Resolution 2026-01, 2026 County MFT Resolution Update/Approval:** The resolution appropriates \$1.2 million in County Motor Fuel Tax, the same amount as last year. **Motion by Bergen and second by Corso to recommend approval of the 2026 County Motor Fuel Tax Resolution 2026-01 for \$1.2 million. All in favor, motion carried.**
4. **Nokomis Rd. (CH 7) Extension Project Update/Approval:** The committee continued to discuss the possibility of allowing the existing county road (which runs through the City of Nokomis on E. Union Street) to be transferred to the City of Nokomis and improving the road to Route 16 to divert truck traffic from city streets. In hopes of receiving grant funding from the state, the committee agreed to move forward with a proposal from an engineering firm to increase the capacity of the road to present at next month's committee and full board meetings. Both Engineer Greenwood and committee member Hancock expressed when deciding who to award funding, that the State of Illinois prioritizes projects that are ready to start.
5. **Vacating Streets and Alleys in Zanesville Update/Approval:** Engineer Greenwood presented the approved petition showing the vacated streets of Zanesville. Greenwood sent the petition to the State's Attorney for final review. **Motion by Ruppert and second by Whitworth to recommend the Petition to Vacate Streets and Alleys in Zanesville on the contingency the States Attorney has no objections to the petition. All in favor, motion carried.**
6. **Heavy Equipment Shed Update/Approval:** Engineer Greenwood reported that the recent heavy snow had revealed a few holes that were subsequently patched. Greenwood hopes to finalize a list of final jobs needing to be completed soon.

7. **Section 23-05122-00-PV – Fillmore Consolidated Township E. 24th Road Improvement Project – Preliminary Engineering Agreement Update/Approval:** Fillmore Consolidated Township received funding to improve Township East 24th Road, which routinely floods as it runs along a creek bottom. Engineer Greenwood reported that since no engineering drawings have been obtained, he will report next month on any further updates.
8. **Other Items:** The committee discussed the possibility of using coal funds to purchase a new tandem truck snow plow to replace an aging truck. The committee agreed to present a resolution to next month's committee and full board meetings. The committee also discussed writing a mailbox policy for when a person's mailbox gets damaged as a result of snow plowing.

Motion by Ruppert, second by Hancock to pay bills. All in favor, motion carried.

Motion by Ruppert, second by Corso to adjourn the meeting. All in favor, motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 9:26 a.m. Minutes respectfully submitted by acting secretary Mike Plunkett as deputized by the Montgomery County Clerk and Recorder Sandy Leitheiser

Montgomery County Board

Finance & Budget Committee Meeting Minutes

County Board Room, 2nd Floor, Historic Courthouse
#1 Courthouse Sq. Hillsboro, IL 62049

8:33 a.m. Thursday, December 4, 2025

Members Present: Andy Ritchie (arrived at 8:50 a.m.), Connie Beck, Rob Corso, Chris Daniels, Dr. Patty Whitworth, Evan Young

Members Absent: Doug Donaldson

Others Present: Mike Plunkett and Lucas Nowlan of County Board Administration, MCEDC Executive Director Kaitlyn Fath, County Clerk Sandy Leitheiser, Treasurer Nikki Lohman, Supervisor of Assessments Tysha Mullen

1. Pledge of Allegiance: was led by Dr. Whitworth.
2. Public Comment: None
3. SOA Office Update/Approval: Supervisor of Assessments Tysha Mullen reported her office was caught up on the 2025 payable 2026 tax cycle, assessment change notices were published and mailed on Dec. 4, a Township Assessor meeting had been scheduled for Dec. 15, and a Board of Review meeting had been scheduled for Jan. 9. She also informed the committee she had promoted Michaela Gray to the Chief Deputy position.
4. Capital Improvement & Coal Fund Reports Update/Approval: Committee Vice Chair Beck noted an October payment of \$188,383.16 and a total Coal Fund balance of \$10,778,950.36.
5. Montgomery County Fair Board Request Update/Approval: After a request for \$75,000 for electrical upgrades was deemed not eligible for the next round of DCEO grant funding, the Montgomery County Fair Board had asked to be on the committee agenda. No one from the fair board was present.
6. 2026 IRS Mileage Rate Update/Approval: The new IRS mileage rate had not been published by meeting time.
7. Pre-Approved Payment List Update/Approval: County Clerk Sandy Leitheiser presented the results of her requested review of the Pre-Approved Payment List, with 12 items suggested for removal for non-use, and the addition of several notes of explanation. **Motion by Whitworth and second by Daniels to recommend approval of changes to the Pre-Approved Payment List. All in favor, motion carried.**
8. Coal Fund Voucher Process Update/Approval: The committee discussed the issue created when Department Heads vouchered money out of Coal Fund 375 in the final week of FY2025. County Clerk Leitheiser said all Coal Fund vouchers used to go through the Finance & Budget Committee, and the committee expressed a desire to return to that procedure. The committee also discussed establishing a procedure for Department Heads and Office Holders to request budgeted expenses from Coal Fund 375, and Leitheiser suggested addressing that in the County Board Rules of Order. **Motion by Young and second by Daniels to recommend all Coal Fund 375 requests to be approved by the Finance & Budget Committee and vouchers presented for payment before the committee's November meeting. All in favor, motion carried. Motion by Ritchie and second by Whitworth to recommend a Coal Fund 375 expense procedure be established in the Montgomery County Board Rules of Order. All in favor, motion carried.**

9. Other Business: Treasurer Nikki Lohman presented a PTAX-451 form that will need approved by the County Board for partial reimbursement of the Supervisor of Assessments salary, and described the ICRMT request to establish a safety committee in 2026. Successful completion of their HELP program will result in a 10% reduction in work comp insurance premiums. Committee member Patty Whitworth asked the committee to anticipate a January request from the Roads & Bridges Committee to use coal funds to purchase a new snow plow truck. MCEDC Director Kaitlynn Fath reported on a potential \$10,000 software program that will help the corporation with business and population retention, assess community health care needs, and numerous other benefits. She also expressed an interest in revitalizing the MCEDC Board of Directors, and at the suggestion of Committee Chair Ritchie, potentially the Montgomery County Planning Commission.

Motion to pay the bills and payroll by Whitworth and second by Daniels. All in favor, motion carried.

Motion to Adjourn by Young and second by Beck. All in favor, motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 9:58 a.m. The summaries of minutes were respectfully submitted by acting secretary Mike Plunkett, as Deputized by Montgomery County Clerk/Recorder Sandy Leitheiser.