

Montgomery County Board Minutes

For Tuesday, January 9th, 2024 – 5:30 PM

The following are minutes of a regular meeting of the Montgomery County Board held at 5:30 PM on Tuesday, January 9th, 2024, in the County Board room on the second floor of the Historic Courthouse in Hillsboro.

The meeting was called to order by County Board Chairman Doug Donaldson at 5:30 PM.

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, David Loucks, Ethan Murzynski, Andy Ritchie, Chad Ruppert, Bob Sneed, Patty Whitworth and Evan Young

Members Absent: None

Pledge of Allegiance to the flag was led by County Board Member Ken Folkerts.

Mileage and Per Diem Approval: Motion by Hughes and second by Folkerts to approve the Mileage and Per Diem. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Voting yes: Beason, Beck, Bergen, Donaldson, Folkerts, Hughes, Jones, Loucks, Murzynski, Ritchie, Ruppert, Sneed, Whitworth and Young. Voting no: none. All in favor, motion carried.

Approval of Minutes of Previous County Board Meeting: Motion by Beck and second by Ritchie to approve the Minutes of the Previous Regular County Board Meeting held on Tuesday, December 12th, 2023. All in favor, motion carried.

CONSENT AGENDA:

- 1. Animal Control Report** -- Emily Gerl – No report submitted to the County Board, just Committee Chairman Ruppert.
- 2. Circuit Clerk's Report** – Daniel Robbins – Report submitted. Robbins said his audit started on Tuesday.
- 3. Coroner's Report** – Randy Leetham – Report submitted.
- 4. County Clerk and Recorder's Report** – Report submitted. Sandy Leitheiser was present for questions.
- 5. Enterprise Zone Report** – Christine Daniels – Report submitted. Daniels was present for questions.
- 6. Environmental Protection Agency Report** – Christine Daniels – Report submitted. Daniels was present for questions.
- 7. Health & TB Department Report** – Hugh Satterlee – Report submitted. Satterlee was present for questions.
- 8. Highway Department Report** – Cody Greenwood – Report submitted. Greenwood was present for questions.
- 9. Information Services Report** – Curt Watkins – Report submitted. Watkins reported his staff has been working on fiber redundancy at the Historic Courthouse and to the tower. He also stated he and his staff is working on the Sheriff's Body Camera project as well as with the Courthouse Complex ADA renovation project.
- 10. Maintenance Superintendent Report** – Phil Ernst – Report submitted.
- 11. Probation Office Report** – Banee Ulrici – Report submitted.
- 12. Public Defender's Report** – Erin Mattson — No report submitted.

13. ROE – Monthly, Quarterly & Annual Reports -- Julie Wollerman – No report submitted.

14. Sheriff’s Report – Rick Robbins – Report submitted. Robbins was present for questions.

15. SOA Report – Kendra Niehaus – Report submitted. Niehaus reported the deadline to file assessment complaints has passed with just under 50 complaints filed. She said the Board of Review will soon begin its work.

16. State’s Attorney Report – Andrew Affrunti – Report submitted. Assistant State’s Attorney Clark Johnson was present for questions.

17. Treasurer’s Report – Nikki Lohman – Report submitted.

18. V.A.C. Report – Cassandra Hampton – Report submitted.

APPROVAL OF ITEMS ON THE CONSENT AGENDA: Motion by Young and second by Jones to approve the 15 items on the Consent Agenda. All in favor, motion carried.

LIAISON REPORTS:

- **708 Board** – Murzynski had nothing new to report.
- **CEFS Board** -- Beason referenced a handout given last month with a list of CEFS services.
- **ETSB / 911 Board** – Bergen reported a hornet’s nest on the Panama tower had been removed, and stated the radio repeater network is finished.
- **Health Department** -- Whitworth had nothing new to report.
- **IL Association of County Officials** -- Bergen reported 583 new state laws are now in place effective 1/1/2024.
- **MCEDC** -- Hughes had nothing new to report.
- **Planning Commission** -- Ritchie had nothing new to report.
- **Senior Citizens Board** -- Folkerts reported the new equipment shed is now in place and its insulation and electricity is complete.
- **UCCI** – Ruppert had nothing new to report.
- **U of I** – Beck had nothing new to report.
- **WCDC** – Jones had nothing new to report.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Montgomery County citizen Bill Schroeder asked if the county had taken any further steps toward zoning. He also said he had been in contact with EMA Coordinator Kevin Schott and U.S. Representative Mary Miller about the absence of the weather device taken down at the VISTRA power plant, and requested board members contact the state and federal representatives and senators about reestablishing the service.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

COORDINATING COMMITTEE: Given by County Board Chairman Doug Donaldson:

1. **Presentation to County Clerk/Recorder Sandy Leitheiser:** Chairman Donaldson presented County Clerk/Recorder Leitheiser a plaque in recognition of her 25 years of service to the citizens of Montgomery County. Leitheiser thanked the County Board

members and her staff present at the meeting for their recognition, and said it is her honor to serve the public as County Clerk/Recorder. Chairman Donaldson invited those present to remain after the meeting for a reception with refreshments in Leitheiser's honor.

2. **West Central Development Council/Job Center Board/CEO Board Update:** Chairman Donaldson reported a meeting scheduled for January 18th, 2024 in Carlinville.
3. **CO2 Sequestration Ad Hoc Committee Update:** Chairman Donaldson said at a meeting on December 18th, 2023, the Ad Hoc committee discussed the preparation needed in case another CO2 Sequestration or Pipeline is planned for the county. He said the committee wants to develop a list of potential county needs if another pipeline materializes, and is exploring ag-only zoning options. Jones asked if the committee would also look into the safety of wells already established.
4. **2024 Committee and Full Board 2024 Meeting Calendar Approval:** The board received the 2024 Committee and Full Board meeting calendar. **Motion by Beason, second by Ritchie, to approve the 2024 meeting date schedule. All in favor, motion carried.**

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

1. **Maintenance and Cleaning Issues and Report Update:** Chairman Sneed reported the new National Maintenance custodian at the Montgomery County Complex has begun work with good response. He said a new generator at the Montgomery County Jail was recently installed, the back stairs of the Historic Courthouse have been tuck-pointed, and tuck-pointing work on the VAC building will also begin as weather permits. Sneed reported Illinois State Historical Society board member Jeff Dunn updated the committee on his plans to place a mural on the north wall of the Courthouse Annex building, possibly featuring a trolley car in the design. Dunn also asked the committee to work with the county on a historical marker about the county's industry and coal history to be placed on the Historic Courthouse grounds. Sneed also reported the elevator in the Historic Courthouse was back in service at noon on Thursday, December 28th, 2023, and thanked all for their patience during this trying time.
2. **Interior Door Project for County Clerk's Office Update:** Sneed reported the project is still awaiting the arrival of the DCEO grant agreement and funds.
3. **Repair/Replace Roof of Block Building at Highway Department Update:** Sneed reported he met with County Engineer Cody Greenwood and the Roads & Bridges Committee along with representatives from EMA and the Montgomery County Health Department on Wednesday morning, January 3rd, 2024 to walk through the block building and brown metal buildings at the new Highway Department for those buildings' possible use by EMA and MCHD. He said funding would be applied for through the second phase of the DCEO Energy Transition Community Grant Program. Sneed said planning will resume after the Highway Department moves items from the building into a new storage building.
4. **Grant for County Board Room Audiovisual Upgrades Update:** Sneed said Circuit Clerk Robbins reported he submitted the grant for audio/visual updates to the County Board Room to the Chief Judge's office on Friday, January 5th, 2024, so it can be used as an emergency back-up court room. Sneed said the updates can also be used by the County Board.

5. **Ameresco - Courthouse Complex Renovation Project Update/Approval:** Sneed said Circuit Clerk Robbins reported renovations are progressing and the main courtroom and jury room should be ready by Friday, January 19th, 2024.

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

1. **Employee Health Insurance and Monthly HRA Report Update:** Ruppert said the Committee reviewed the report, and they anticipate the 2023 end-of-year report from Assured Partners in February.
2. **Personnel Manual Amendments Update:** Ruppert reported any amendments are pending due to a discussion needed with the State's Attorney's office.
3. **FMLA and Paid Leave for all Workers Policy Options Update:** Ruppert said Sheriff Robbins recently researched this topic with the ICRMT legal team, and he will provide an email with suggested county policy and language which will meet FMLA requirements. Ruppert also stated paid leave language needs updated and will be addressed next month. He said Sheriff Robbins also asked the committee to consider changing county policy from requiring employees to exhaust all paid leave time during an extended leave to allowing them to keep a maximum of 3-5 sick days in reserve. Ruppert stated the committee will consider making this change if it's allowable by law.
4. **Personnel Committee Member Handbook Update:** Ruppert reported the Personnel Committee handbook will be compiled and distributed after the two union contracts approved at the December board meeting are signed by the union representatives.
5. **Animal Control Facility Update/Approval:** Ruppert noted the monthly report was submitted to him.
6. **Animal Control Policy Update:** Ruppert reported he has been reviewing the draft policy provided to him by County Board member Jones last month, and he will meet with the Animal Control warden regarding this policy soon.
7. **MCEDC Update:** Ruppert stated a map of underserved areas the federal Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) Program grant funds is under development; and MCEDC Executive Director Bill Montgomery added the federal government is taking comments on those maps, which should be available for initial review on Jan. 20th, 2024.
8. **DCEO Energy Transition Grant Update:** Ruppert said County Board Administrator Chris Daniels has been answering questions as part of the DCEO grant review process, and she is anticipating final grant agreement. Chairman Donaldson said he will appoint a committee near the end of the meeting to begin discussion on the 2024 Award phase of the DCEO Energy Transition Grant, which will focus on county infrastructure. Sheriff Robbins asked if funds to develop a law enforcement and first responder training facility could be included in the 2024 Award phase. Chairman Donaldson stated there will be a meeting with Department Heads when the Notice of Funding Opportunity comes from DCEO sometime this month to review "wish" lists for county infrastructure needs.
9. **Wind and Solar Legislation SB 1699 Update:** Ruppert said the State's Attorney's Office has been comparing new state law to the county's current ordinances, and he stated the law overrides the county ordinance. Chairman Donaldson added the State's Attorney had responded earlier that day with a few suggested revisions to the county's current ordinances.

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

1. **SOA Report Update:** Ritchie reported Supervisor of Assessments Kendra Niehaus reported to the committee she is awaiting township and MTA contracts from South Litchfield Township and Grisham-Walshville-East Fork MTA. Chairman Donaldson said he will make contact with those township leaders regarding these outstanding contracts. As of the January 1st, 2024, deadline for recording leases, 145 were recorded out of 206; and the remaining 61 will not receive exemptions totaling an additional \$366,000 in EAV on the tax rolls. Niehaus also informed the committee because there is no zoning ordinance, the county does not require a permit before residential solar panel installation.
2. **Capital Improvement Fund Reports Update/Approval:** Ritchie reported \$1,333,996.84 in the Capital Improvement Fund as of the end of the past fiscal year, including \$159,068.68 in interest earned. Treasurer Lohman reported to the committee new interest rates ranging from 5.2% to 5.5 and reported a December 2023 coal royalty payment of over \$327,000. Ritchie said Auditors are on site and began work on Monday, January 8.
3. **IRS Mileage Reimbursement 2024 Increase from \$.655 to \$.67 per mile Approval:** Motion by Ritchie and second by Whitworth to approve increasing mileage reimbursement for 2024 from \$.655 to \$.67 per mile per IRS guidelines beginning Wednesday, Jan. 10, 2024, after County Board approval. All in favor, motion carried.
4. **Intergovernmental Agreement between Montgomery County and the Multi-Township Assessment District of Fillmore Consolidated and Witt Townships Approval:** Motion by Ritchie and second by Young to approve an intergovernmental agreement between Montgomery County and the Multi-Township Assessment District of Fillmore Consolidated and Witt Townships. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 21, pages 1-2).
5. **Bellwether contract for FY2025 Budget Preparation Update:** Ritchie reported the new contract from Bellwether for the FY2025 budget has not arrived. He anticipates no increase in the \$12,000 contract; \$6,000 would be due upon execution and the remaining \$6,000 upon budget completion. Jones asked if Bellwether also provides Human Resources services; Ritchie said he believes they do. Sheriff Robbins added an HR department would be a vital improvement for our county government services.
6. **Intergovernmental Agreement between Montgomery County and City of Nokomis for Police Radio and Telephone Services Approval:** Ritchie stated Undersheriff Tyson Holshouser presented dispatch contracts between Montgomery County and the cities of Litchfield and Nokomis for Dec. 1, 2023, through Nov. 30, 2026. Sheriff Rick Robbins noted increases in the contracts are from costs related to increases in employee salaries. The agreement with Nokomis is for \$25,899 the first year, \$27,193 the second year, and \$28,280 the third year. Motion by Ritchie and second by Folkerts to approve intergovernmental agreement with the City of Nokomis for Police Radio and Telephone Services from December 1, 2023 through November 30, 2026. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 21, pages 3-4).
7. **Intergovernmental Agreement between Montgomery County and City of Litchfield for Police Radio and Telephone Services Approval:** Ritchie stated the agreement with Litchfield is for \$188,376 the first year, \$197,794 the second year, and \$205,705 the third year. Young asked if monthly payments are required. Sheriff Robbins said both contracts specify monthly payments, but both municipalities often pay more than one month at a time. Motion by Ritchie and second by Sneed to approve intergovernmental agreement with the City of Litchfield for Police Radio and Telephone Services from December 1, 2023

through November 30, 2026. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 21, pages 5-6).

8. **Circuit Clerk Tech Grant Update/Approval:** Ritchie said Circuit Clerk Daniel Robbins reported he submitted the tech grant for approval on Friday, January 5th, 2024.
9. **Other Business:** Ritchie said the Nokomis-Witt Area Ambulance Service requested \$10,000 in ARPA funds for pagers required for their transition to a volunteer BLS transport service. He said this request will be on next month's Finance & Budget agenda. Ritchie said Sheriff Robbins reported to the committee his office had budgeted for one new Chevy Tahoe in Office 375 for FY2024; but because that vehicle is not available, the MCSO has instead ordered a Dodge Durango at a cost of nearly \$10,000 under budget. County Clerk Leitheiser informed the committee since the closure of the county ambulance billing office, mail is still arriving there and being distributed by the County Board Administrative office; and a County Ambulance Billing office bank account remains open. Ritchie said Treasurer Lohman will close the account after the audit has been completed, and Daniels said her office will look into solving the mail issue.

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

1. **Resolution 2024-03 appropriating funds for 100% county culvert replacement on Elevator Rd. Approval:** Greenwood presented Resolution 2024-03 to the committee appropriating an estimated \$30,000 from County Aid to Bridge Fund 235 for a culvert replacement on Elevator Road. **Motion by Murzynski and second by Whitworth, to approve Resolution 2024-03 appropriating funds in the amount of \$30,000 for 100% county culvert replacement on Elevator Road. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 21, pages 7-8).**
2. **Section No. 17-09117-00-BR Irving Twp N. 17th Ave. Bridge replacement supplemental Engineering Agreement Update:** Murzynski reported the Supplemental Engineering Agreement has not been completed and will be on next month's agenda.
3. **City of Litchfield request to install 3" force main sewer line on PIN 10-28-100-006 in North Litchfield Twp Approval:** Greenwood presented a map to the committee and reported the City of Litchfield had requested permission to install a 3-inch force main sewer line on county property. The eight acre parcel is abandoned railroad right-of-way on the east side of the road and Litchfield would like access to serve the Illinois Department of Transportation maintenance yard. Sneed said he talked to the Litchfield City Administrator, who indicated a willingness to accept deed to the property. **Motion by Murzynski and second by Bergen to approve giving permission to the City of Litchfield to install a 3-inch force main sewer line on county property 10-28-100-006, and refer matter to the Buildings & Grounds Committee to pursue possibly transferring property to City of Litchfield. All in favor, motion carried.**
4. **Village of Farmersville letter of support request for railroad crossing Approval:** Murzynski reported the Village of Farmersville had requested a letter of support to request the railroad update the crossing on Mine Avenue in Farmersville to "Out of Service" status. Greenwood has no issue with doing so, and he reported the Panhandle School District is also in support. Chairman Donaldson read the proposed letter of support. Jones said the county should support the Village of Farmersville, and Young said proposed wind farms may want to use the rail spur during construction. **Motion by Murzynski and second by Jones to approve a letter of support from the Montgomery County Board to update the Mine Avenue railroad crossing to "Out of Service." All in favor, motion carried.**

5. **Other Items:** The committee discussed the size of the proposed new equipment storage building, whether it would need sprinklers, and the construction schedule.
6. **Repair/Replace roof on white block building Update/Approval:** Committee toured the white block building and brown metal buildings on highway department site. Murzynski said the committee will continue research after a new Highway Department storage building is complete.

APPROVAL OF THE COMMITTEE REPORTS & MINUTES:

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

CHAIRMAN’S REPORT: Chairman Donaldson said he plans to schedule a Mayors Meeting for some time in February.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Chairman Donaldson announced an IDNR Public Hearing regarding the recent Deer Run Mine permit application will be held on Monday, January 22nd, 2024 in the County Board Room, 2nd floor of the Historic Courthouse in Hillsboro, Illinois. Chairman Donaldson also reported a dinner hosted by Pattern Energy will be held on Tuesday, January 23rd, 2024 at the Canton Inn in Schram City beginning at 5:30 p.m.

APPOINTMENTS: Motion by Beason and second by Sneed to appoint Doug Donaldson, Patty Whitworth, Chad Ruppert, Mark Hughes, Sandy Leitheiser and Dan Hough to a DCEO Ad Hoc Committee to plan application for the 2024 Award of the DCEO Energy Transition grant. All in favor, motion carried.

PAY BILLS AND PAYROLL:

Motion by Young and second by Bergen 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. Voting no: none. All in favor, motion carried.

ADJOURN:

The next regular full board meeting will be on Tuesday, February 13th, 2024, at 5:30 p.m. in the County Board Room, 2nd floor of the Historic Courthouse in Hillsboro, Illinois. Motion by Jones and second by Folkerts to adjourn the Full Board Meeting. All in favor, motion carried.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:25 pm. Minutes respectfully recorded and submitted by Montgomery County Clerk and Recorder Sandy Leitheiser.