

Montgomery County Board Minutes

For Tuesday, March 12th, 2024 – 5:30 PM

The following are minutes of a regular meeting of the Montgomery County Board held at 5:30 PM in the County Board Room of the Historic Courthouse in Hillsboro, Illinois on Tuesday, March 12th, 2024.

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

Roll call was taken – 13 members present, 1 member absent.

Members Present: Russell Beason, Connie Beck, 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: Bill Bergen

Pledge of Allegiance to the flag: was led by County Board Member David Loucks.

Mileage and Per Diem Approval:

Motion by Hughes, second by Folkerts to approve the mileage and per diem. ROLL CALL VOTE: Voting yes were Beason, Beck, 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, second by Whitworth to approve the minutes of the previous regular County Board meeting held on Tuesday, February 13th, 2024. All in favor, motion carried.

CONSENT AGENDA:

- 1. Animal Control Report** – Emily Gerl, report submitted, was present for questions.
- 2. Circuit Clerk’s Report** – Daniel Robbins, report submitted, was present for questions.
- 3. Coroner’s Report** – Randy Leetham, report submitted, was present for questions.
- 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, report submitted.
- 10. Maintenance Superintendent Report** – Phil Ernst, report submitted.

11. **Probation Office Report** – Banee 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, was present for questions.
15. **SOA Report** – Kendra Niehaus, report submitted, was present for questions.
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.
18. **V.A.C. Report** – Cassandra Hampton, report submitted.

APPROVAL OF ITEMS ON THE CONSENT AGENDA:

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

LIAISON REPORTS:

- **708 Board** – Murzynski said the board reviewed quarterly reports at its Monday, March 11th, 2024 meeting.
- **CEFS Board** -- Beason had nothing new to report.
- **ETSB / 911 Board** – Bergen was not present.
- **Health Department** -- Whitworth said the board meets next month.
- **IL Association of County Officials** -- Bergen was not present.
- **MCEDC** -- Hughes said the board heard a presentation at their February 15th, 2024 meeting from historian Tom Emery about Lincoln in Montgomery County.
- **Planning Commission** -- Ritchie had nothing new to report.
- **Senior Citizens Board** -- Folkerts said the board will meet on Monday, March 18th, 2024.
- **UCCI** – Ruppert said the organization has recently shared communications about webinars.
- **U of I** – Beck had nothing new to report.
- **WCDC** – Jones had nothing new to report.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

1. Citizen Larry Miller asked the board to reconsider its 6-month euthanasia policy for animals at Animal Control and asked to extend that time to one year. He said older dogs take longer to adopt.
2. Citizen John Galer, owner of The Journal-News and The Raymond News in Montgomery County as well as several publications in Macoupin County, spoke in favor of public notices in newspapers. Active in the Illinois Press Association and the National Newspaper Association, Galer said public notices are frequently under assault, and Illinois HB4512 targets assessment notices. He pointed out the publication of assessment notices is part of public policy and procedure; the date of publication starts the 30-day window for complaints to be filed and is meant to aid transparency. He said the rate for publication is set by legislation and is less than half his newspapers’ ad rate.
3. Citizen Bill Schroeder updated the board on his ongoing efforts to get weather radio service back in Montgomery County. He has repeatedly contacted the offices of U.S. Rep. Mary Miller and U.S. Sen. Tammy Duckworth, who both reported the 60-90-day

process is in the hands of the NOAA. He urged the board and public to contact elected officials and encourage expediency.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

COORDINATING COMMITTEE: Given by County Board Chairman Doug Donaldson:

National Agriculture Day Resolution 2024-04 Update/Approval: The resolution noting the contributions of the Ag industry and community was read by Chairman Donaldson. **Motion by Young and second by Beason to adopt Resolution 2024-04 recognizing March 19th, 2024, as National Agriculture Day. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 21, page 93).**

1. **Information Systems Report Update/Approval:** Donaldson stated Information Systems Director Curt Watkins reported 81 work tickets in January. He also shared the Cress Hill fiber project is complete, the redundant fiber loop is almost complete, and the court grant was approved. He is updating switches, dealing with issues on the new website, and is close to being able to train offices on updating their portions of the website. Donaldson said Watkins noted an up-tick in phishing emails and discussed with the committee the need for security camera record procedures, and storage space.
2. **Hazards Mitigation Plan Resolution 2024-05 Update/Approval:** Donaldson said the Hazards Mitigation plan is finished and available for inspection. EMA Director Kevin Schott informed the board his office has been developing a plan to deal with potential heavy traffic for the April eclipse that will attract visitors to Carbondale. **Motion by Beck and second by Folkerts to pass Resolution 2024-05 adopting the Montgomery County Multi-Jurisdictional Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 21, page 94).**
3. **West Central Development Council/Job Center Board/CEO Board Update/Approval:** Donaldson said the council met on January 18th, 2024 and will next meet on April 18th, 2024, and is progressing toward its goals.
4. **DCEO Energy Grant Ad Hoc Committee Update/Approval:** Donaldson said the committee reviewed a spreadsheet detailing department requests for Round 2. The deadline for Phase 1 of the application process is March 15th, 2024; and Chairman Donaldson reported the county's Phase 1 of the application has been submitted. He also noted the county was informed earlier in the day the grant agreement had been executed on the Round 1 of grant projects.
5. **CO2 Sequestration Ad Hoc Committee Update/Approval:** Donaldson said EMA Director Kevin Schott presented a list of assets needed to respond to any potential future CO2 Sequestration projects at a meeting held on Tuesday, February 27th, 2024. He said the next meeting is set for Wednesday, May 22nd. Donaldson added the County Board Coordinators Office had spoken to Dan Brennan of the IDNR department that permitted the Navigator CO2 test well in Montgomery County, (the Department of Oil & Gas) on Tuesday afternoon, March 12th. He stated Brennan said Navigator has responded to IDNR well inspectors, and the well status is "under administrative review to ensure everyone is safe and the well is in compliance with regulations."
6. **Mayor's Meeting Update/Approval:** Chairman Donaldson reported Mayors were generally positive about the two animal control contract options, with one based on a per capita cost and the other based on a per call cost. He said new state regulations expanded

the county Enterprise Zone from 15 to 20 square miles, and the next Mayors' meeting was set for Wednesday, May 29th, 2024.

7. **Illegal Immigrant Resolution 2024-06 Update/Approval:** Chairman Donaldson read Resolution 2024-06. **Motion by Jones and second by Ruppert to adopt Resolution 2024-06 declaring Montgomery County will not spend local tax dollars on the immigration crisis for migrants and asylum seekers entering Montgomery County. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 21, pages 95-96).**
8. **List of Annual and Multi-Year County Board Action Items Update/Approval:** A spreadsheet of annual action and multi-year action items required by the board was included in county board packets.

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

1. **Maintenance and Cleaning Issues and Report Update/Approval:** Sneed said Maintenance Superintendent Phil Ernst reviewed the 38 items on his monthly report, which was in the county board packet.
2. **Historic Courthouse Chimney Liner Bid Update/Approval:** Sneed said the committee reviewed a bid from Klein's Chimney Service of Springfield for \$12,720 to install a 70-foot stainless steel liner in the Historic Courthouse chimney, where condensation moisture is damaging brick and has caused a wet spot that continues to grow. **Motion by Sneed and second by Hughes to award a bid for \$12,720 to Klein's Chimney Service to install chimney liner. All in favor, motion carried.**
3. **Interior Door Project for County Clerk's Office Update/Approval:** Sneed reported work funded through the DCEO Energy Transition Grant will begin when work in the Courthouse Complex is complete. County Clerk Leitheiser thanked the board for their support.
4. **County Board Room Tech Grant Update/Approval:** Sneed said the tech grant has been approved, and Thompson Electronics Company was on site on Wednesday, March 6th, for a pre-construction walk-through.
5. **Former Montgomery County Highway Department Lots (East Side of University) Update/Approval:** Sneed said the Montgomery County Highway Department has completed lot work on three lots at their former site on the east side of University Street in Hillsboro. The county has been in touch with the Hillsboro School District to see if there is any interest in using the lots as a potential high school building trades project site. The County Board Coordinators office has invited the school district to next month's committee meeting to discuss interest.

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

1. **Employee Health Insurance and Monthly HRA Report Update/Approval:** Ruppert stated the HRA Usage Per Fund report was included in packet.
2. **Animal Control Facility Update/Approval:** Ruppert said the county has applied for DCEO Energy Transition Grant funding for 3 requested updates at the facility and will wait to see if they are approved before proceeding.
3. **Animal Control Municipal Contracts Update/Approval:** Ruppert reported the Enterprise Zone mayors meeting was held on February 28th, 2024, and mayors were presented with a choice of contract structures, one based on a per capita charge and the

other based on a per call charge. He said the committee will review data and come up with a per capita charge recommendation.

4. **Animal Control Policy Update/Approval:** Ruppert said the policy remains under review and will be shared with municipalities when ready.
5. **HR Consultant Proposal Update/Approval:** Ruppert said County Board Coordinators' office staff met with Ben Harmening and Kevin Madeira of ICRMT earlier that day regarding HR services offered by ICRMT included in insurance premiums. County Treasurer Nikki Lohman and Trish Roemelin from her office were present for the meeting. ICRMT detailed their HR advisory services and extensive training catalog, and offered to meet with department heads to explain services included in county insurance premiums. The County Board Coordinators office staff will set up a department head meeting with ICRMT, as well as invite Bushue to a future committee meeting.
6. **Drainage District Concerns About Solar/Wind Update/Approval:** Ruppert said Ryan Green and Quint Shambaugh of Pinion Advisory, the consultant from Moweaqua developing the UKA permit application drainage plan, were present virtually. Shambaugh said a local contractor will be on-site during construction with the goal of fixing "every single tile" damaged within 24 hours.
7. **UKA Virden Wind Project Update/Approval:** Ruppert said Charles Wright of UKA reported he and Maggie Poteau had meetings with the County Board Coordinators office, as well as Jeremy Connor from Hurst-Rosche. Both Wright and Poteau were present, and Wright said UKA is refining and reviewing standards and will submit a permit application soon.
8. **Review Spreadsheet & Map of Wind and Solar Projects Update/Approval:** Ruppert reported County Board Coordinators office developed a spreadsheet of contacts planning solar and wind projects throughout the county and displayed a framed map with project locations built by Kevin Brink in the county GIS office.
9. **DCEO Energy Transition Grant Status Update/Approval:** Ruppert said Chairman Donaldson signed the DCEO Energy Transition Grant Agreement last week, and the grant process is moving forward.
10. **DCEO Energy Transition Grant Small Business Start-Up Incentive Update/Approval:** Ruppert stated as part of the DCEO Energy Transition Grant, the county has been awarded \$182,935 for Small Business Start-Up Grants ranging from \$25,000 to \$50,000 depending upon the number of employees. The committee reviewed and recommended approval of the Small Biz Grant Application. Ruppert said the county will work with MCEDC in implementing the grant. **Motion by Ruppert and second by Jones to approve the county Small Biz Grant Application. All in favor, motion carried.**
11. **Tourism Grant Application Update/Approval:** Ruppert stated the committee reviewed the application for this year's county Tourism Grant, which can be completed on-line on the county's website. **Motion by Ruppert and second by Whitworth to approve the county Tourism Grant Application. All in favor, motion carried.**

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

1. **SOA Report Update/Approval:** Ritchie said Supervisor Kendra Niehaus said her office should have a contract with Grisham-Walshville-East Fork Multi-township Assessment

District ready for approval next month. Her office is roughly one week ahead of last year's tax schedule, and 444 Board of Review tentative notices were mailed on March 6th. She is working with the State's Attorney to clarify whether 3 landlords should be getting Disabled Veteran Exemptions.

2. **Resolution of Support for Illinois HB 4512 Update/Approval:** Ritchie said the Supervisor of Assessments also asked the board to approve a resolution of support for Illinois HB4512, which would give counties the option to publish assessments either by newspaper or county website. Niehaus said in a typical year, publishing assessment changes is just under \$4,400, but in a quad year on average, just under \$22,000. Chairman Donaldson read the resolution and noted passage of HB 4512 would save the county money, but much of the county does not have adequate internet access to find information on the website. Whitworth said having a published record of legal notices is crucial, and advised it is not appropriate for the county board to take a stand. State's Attorney Affrunti said the bill would give the county an option to publish assessment notices on its website, but not mandate it. Hughes pointed out the resolution of support for HB 4512 was not recommended by the Finance & Budget Committee. Ritchie said many county residents, including he and his mother, use the newspaper as a source of information instead of websites. **Motion by Ritchie and second by Jones to approve a Resolution of Support for Illinois HB4512. ROLL CALL: Voting in favor, none. Voting against: Beason, Beck, Donaldson, Folkerts, Hughes, Jones, Loucks, Murzynski, Ritchie, Ruppert, Sneed, Whitworth, and Young. Motion failed 0-13.**
3. **Capital Improvement Fund Reports Update/Approval:** Ritchie stated the board reviewed reports submitted by County Treasurer Nikki Lohman, noting a coal royalty payment of \$268,795.04 for January, and a January 31st Capital Improvement Fund balance of \$1,534,032.92.
4. **Coroner and Circuit Clerk Elected Official Salary Resolution 2024-07 Update/Approval:** Ritchie stated the committee reviewed and discussed a spreadsheet of county elected official salaries dating back to 1990. The salaries for Coroner and Circuit Clerk must be set at least 180 days before the General Election. The consensus of the committee was to keep continuity in salaries for elected officials. **Motion by Ritchie and second by Young to approve Resolution 2024-07 setting salaries for the Coroner and Circuit Clerk beginning in FY 2025 with \$2,200 increases per year over a four-year term. All in favor, motion carried. (See Resolution Book 21, pages 97-98).**
5. **DC Waste Recycling Baler Lease Update/Approval:** Ritchie said the committee reviewed and discussed a proposed recycling baler lease renewal with DC Waste. The proposed new lease would be for 2 years with lessee options for third and fourth years. The remaining terms would be the same as the previous 4-year lease: a \$700 per month payment plus one no-charge 65-gallon recycling tote for county uses. Since the committee meeting, Chairman Donaldson has inspected the current condition of the baler, and DC Waste has provided proof of insurance. In response to a question from Ruppert, Donaldson said DC Waste has no interest in owning the baler, and at the end of two years of the proposed lease agreement, the lease payments will have surpassed the purchase price of the baler by \$10,000. Young said he believes the county should sell the baler to avoid future problems. **Motion by Ritchie and second by Beck to approve a two-year lease agreement with options for years three and four with DC Waste for recycling baler. On a voice vote, Beason, Beck, Donaldson, Folkerts, Hughes, Jones, Loucks,**

Murzynski, Ritchie, Ruppert, Sneed, and Whitworth voted in favor; Young voted against. Motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 21, pages 99-103).

6. **Hillsboro Area Ambulance Service Agreement Update/Approval:** Ritchie said the committee reviewed and discussed ambulance agreements with Hillsboro Area Ambulance Service and Nokomis-Witt Area Ambulance Service. Agreements with Farmersville-Waggoner and Raymond-Harvel have yet to be returned. **Motion by Ritchie and second by Whitworth to approve the agreement with Hillsboro Area Ambulance Service. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 21, pages 104-106).**
7. **Nokomis-Witt Area Ambulance Service Agreement Update/Approval:** Ritchie reported the agreement with Nokomis-Witt Area Ambulance Service had been tabled by the committee pending review of the levy totals, which has since been accomplished, and State's Attorney Affrunti advised the county board could proceed with the agreement. **Motion by Ritchie and second by Folkerts to approve the agreement with Nokomis-Witt Area Ambulance Service. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 21, pages 107-109).**
8. **\$10,000 ARPA Ordinance for Nokomis-Witt Ambulance Pagers Update/Approval:** **Motion by Ritchie and second by Ruppert to approve an Ordinance to reimburse the Nokomis-Witt Area Ambulance Service \$10,000 from ARPA funds for pagers. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 21, page 110- this ARPA Ordinance was later found to be a duplicate of a prior ARPA Ordinance passed by the County Board in July, 2023).**

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

1. **Wind Farm information from UKA Update/Approval:** Murzynski referred board members to a packet on their desks from a presentation about the Virden Wind project. He said the committee discussed the project and road usage with UKA. Hughes asked how roads will be protected, and County Engineer Greenwood said through a road use agreement yet to be negotiated.
2. **Specifications for Drainage Tile across/along County Highways Update/Approval:** Murzynski said County Engineer Cody Greenwood is working on specs to be used on a case-by-case basis.
3. **Section No. 24-00147-00-FP Nokomis Rd. Reconstruction Update/Approval:** Murzynski said County Engineer Cody Greenwood is working on an engineering agreement for a cost study.
4. **Resolution 2024-05 to appropriate funds for 100% County culvert replacement on Witt Ave. Update/Approval:** **Motion by Murzynski and second by Ruppert to approve Resolution 2024-05 for an estimated \$12,000 from the County Aid to Bridge Fund for a culvert replacement on Witt Avenue. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 21, pages 111-112).**
5. **Resolution 2024-06 to appropriate funds for 100% County culvert replacement on New Bethel Ave. Update/Approval:** **Motion by Murzynski and second by Whitworth to approve Resolution 2024-06 for an estimated \$8,000 from the County Aid to Bridge Fund for a culvert replacement on New Bethel Avenue. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 21, pages 113-114).**

6. **Resolution 2024-07 to appropriate funds for 100% County culvert replacement on Fillmore Tr. Update/Approval:** Motion by Murzynski and second by Young to approve Resolution 2024-07 for an estimated \$8,000 from the County Aid to Bridge Fund for a culvert replacement on Fillmore Trail. All in favor, motion carried. (For copy, see Resolution Book 21, pages 115-116).
7. **Repair/Replace roof on white block building Update/Approval:** Murzynski said County Engineer Cody Greenwood drafted specs, sent them to Chad Ruppert and Bob Sneed for comments, and will incorporate those comments into the specs, then advertise for bids. The first ad has appeared in the newspaper, and bid opening will be at Buildings & Grounds Committee.
8. **Former Highway Department lots Update/Approval:** Murzynski said work is complete on three former Highway Department lots on the east side of University Street in Hillsboro, and the Buildings & Grounds Committee will inquire if the Hillsboro School District has any interest in them for possible Building Trades Class home sites.
9. **Purchase of Caterpillar Model CW16 Pneumatic Compactor:** Murzynski said County Engineer Greenwood said the rubber wheels on the compactor make it a better option to roll over oil-and-chip roads. **Motion by Murzynski and second by Jones to approve an invoice to Altorfer, Inc., for \$139,265.00 from Coal Fund 375 for a Caterpillar Model CW16 Pneumatic Compactor. ROLL CALL VOTE: Voting in favor: Beason, Beck, Donaldson, Folkerts, Hughes, Jones, Loucks, Murzynski, Ritchie, Ruppert, Sneed, Whitworth, and Young. Voting against: None. Motion carried 13-0.**

APPROVAL OF THE COMMITTEE REPORTS & MINUTES:

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Motion by Hughes and second by Whitworth to enter Executive Session to discuss pending, probable or imminent litigation 5 ILCS 120/2(c) (11) at 6:45 pm. All in favor, motion carried.

Motion by Whitworth and second by Ritchie to re-enter Open Session at 6:57 pm. All in favor, motion carried. No action was taken.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. **Primary Election Day:** Chairman Donaldson reminded members polls will be open from 6 am to 7 pm on Tuesday, March 19th, 2024 for the General Primary Election. County Clerk Leitheiser said early voting turnout has been light so far, and also encouraged all to vote.

SCHEDULE CHANGES: None.

APPOINTMENTS: None.

PAY BILLS AND PAYROLL:

Motion by Ritchie and second by Sneed to pay all approved bills and payroll. All in favor, motion carried. ROLL CALL VOTE: Voting in favor: Beason, Beck, Donaldson, Folkerts, Hughes, Jones, Loucks, Murzynski, Ritchie, Ruppert, Sneed, Whitworth, and Young. Voting against: None. Motion carried 13-0.

ADJOURN:

The next regular full board meeting will be on Tuesday, April 9th, 2024 at 5:30 p.m. in the County Board Room, Hillsboro, Illinois. Motion by Murzynski, second by Beck to adjourn the Full Board Meeting. All in favor, motion carried.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:59 pm. Minutes respectfully recorded and submitted by Montgomery County Clerk and Recorder Sandy Leitheiser.