

**Montgomery County Board
Minutes**

For Thursday, December 13th, 2007 – 6:30 PM

The following are minutes of a Special meeting of the Montgomery County Board held at 6:30 PM on Thursday, December 13th, 2007 in the County Board Chambers of the Historic Courthouse, Hillsboro, Illinois.

The meeting was called to order by County Board Chairman Mike Plunkett at 6:30 PM.

Roll call was taken. 21 members present, 0 members absent.

Members Present: Nelson Aumann, Mary Bathurst, Connie Beck, George Blankenship, Terry Bone, Bonnie Branum, Ronald Deabenderfer, Toby Dean, John Downs, Robert Durbin, Ed Helgen, Dennis Jagodzinski, Frank Komor, Sharon Kuchar, Joyce Matthews, Gene Miles, Roger Myers, Dale Ogden, Mike Plunkett, Bill Sielschott, Richard Wendel.

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Audience members included State's Attorney Chris Matoush, Highway Engineer Rueben Boehler, Hurst Rosche Engineering representatives Tom Baker and Brent Lance, Hillsboro Historical Society representative Idabel Evan, Health Department Director Hugh Satterlee. Approximately 15 others were present in the audience.

Pledge of Allegiance to the flag was given.

Chairman's Statement: Chairman Plunkett stated that the purpose of this meeting is to discuss the future of the Historic Courthouse with public comments and questions to be allowed, and said that the Building and Grounds Committee members are in need of direction to help them proceed with building plans for the Courthouse Complex. He said that the options that have been discussed in previous meetings range in price from \$2.2 million to 6.5 million, and these options may be mixed and matched. The committee will be working with a budget of about \$3 million without increasing taxes or borrowing money to finance the project, which would leave approximately \$1.5 million in reserve. Building and Grounds Committee Chairman Terry Bone introduced Brent Lance and Tom Baker of Hurst-Rosche Engineering, who first assured all that there are no immediate structural concerns at the Historic Courthouse at the present time with no asbestos or air quality problems, and then presented three Building Assessment Options in a PowerPoint presentation (**See Resolution Book 8, pages 11-21**). Lance shared that interviews were conducted with Historic Courthouse Office Holders to assess their office needs and an analysis was done on the information gathered. Tom Baker stated that the prices listed are based on 2008 materials and labor costs.

Public Comment:

Member Aumann stated that is the County Board's obligation to look at long range plans and not a quick fix because the current functionality of the building is not feasible. The county needs to look at something that would function for the next 20 to 50 years instead of putting more money into this building, which is obsolete.

Member Durbin stated that even with a 28,000 square foot addition it would be hard to tell what space may be needed 10 years down the road with growth of offices, and even though he likes this building, it is a headache.

Chairman Plunkett stated that the county would still need to take care of the Historic Courthouse building and confirmed that if the county moves ROE and SOA Offices the county would need additional 7,500 square feet of office space.

Vice Chairman Jagodzinski stated that an additional Option 4 is his suggestion, which would expand the Courthouse Complex to its maximum of 28,000 square feet and would get every office over to the new building. He stated that the Public Building Commission had a long range plan for the 28,000 square feet expansion.

Member Downs agreed with Jagodzinski and Aumann that the Historic Courthouse is obsolete and that the county should get all county offices in the Courthouse Complex building as well as the board room, but we should not let the Historic Courthouse go without maintenance.

Member Dean stated that the county should put all county offices in the Courthouse Complex building, and said he likes the Historic Courthouse also, and wondered if it could be turned over to the Historical Society.

Member Sielschott reminded members that the county needs to find the finances for the building project first, and must have a plan to pay for it after coal revenue is received.

Member Bathurst stated that the County Board should not lose sight of the importance to preserve this building, and reminded them to remember the Illinois Capital Building and the US Congress Building. She stated that it is a good idea to build an addition to the new courthouse and because of the safety issues surrounding this building it would be a bad idea for the offices to stay here.

Member Kuchar agreed with Bathurst to restore the Historic Courthouse to its original glory.

Member Aumann asked if information could be located to confirm the cost of maintaining and upgrading the Historic Courthouse over the past 20 years, and stated that the county needs to look at the long range planning for this building.

Chairman Plunkett stated that this building is part of the county's heritage and should be put at the top of the priority list, and said that the board members should consider where their heart is- if you are a lover of old buildings, it's worth it to renovate the Historic Courthouse, if you're not, it's not worth it to renovate the Historic Courthouse.

Member Helgen asked if the Public Building Commission could be an option for financing.

Member Matthews, who is a member of the Public Building Commission, stated that the PBC can assist financially with expansion for the Court System offices, but not for the Treasurer or County Clerk offices.

Member Bone stated that he likes the Historic Courthouse also, but the County must look at what is feasible and the right thing to do, which is to build and get what we want across the street.

Member Dean agreed with Bathurst about the priority needed for the preservation of the Historic Courthouse, and suggested that there are several empty buildings downtown that could possibly house the Supervisor of Assessments and Regional Office of Education.

Member Deabenderfer asked if we are in violation of the ADA in the County Board room, and Engineer Lance responded it is in compliance with ADA standards. **Deabenderfer** asked if the Supervisor of Assessments is safe at this time, and Engineer Lance responded that there are issues with egress in that office and future options have designated that space for storage only.

Member Branum stated it would be foolish to spend \$300,000 to restore the County Board room with the original ceiling. Engineer Lance clarified it would also include removing the paneling from the room.

County Clerk Leitheiser stated that there were a few members from the Historical Society present and asked if the Montgomery County Genealogy Society or Hillsboro Historical Society could take over the old courthouse.

Idabel Evans who is with the Hillsboro Historical Society stated that should the county not be able to maintain the Historic Courthouse, the Hillsboro Historical Society can not either.

State's Attorney Matoush stated there is a need for more space in the Courthouse Complex, and storage is already a problem.

Member Durbin stated that he heard through United Counties Council of Illinois (UCCI) that Cass County's Courthouse was restored, and would research this further.

Chairman Plunkett asked if the County owned enough land to accommodate the addition, and Engineer Lance responded they did.

Bill Schroeder of Hillsboro questioned why the written Options start with 18,000 square feet and now discussions include space needs to 28,000 square feet, and received clarification from Member Jagodzinski that the Courthouse Complex's original expansion can include 28,000 square feet, which isn't on the written Options, but a possibility. Schroeder also asked if all the costs represented on the Options include inflation, and Hurst Rosche representative Baker stated that the project would be bid at today prices with a 5 to 8 year project length, so if the decision is made to begin construction in 2008, the cost will be set.

Member Helgen questioned whether Courthouse Complex offices would be closed during construction if the addition is done there. Engineer Lance stated that the design of the building addition was to have the least amount of disruption.

Member Matthews stated that given the security needs of our day, housing all county offices together with security would be important, and Engineer Lance stated there would need to be a separate entrance or one main entrance for security.

Member Bathurst questioned if Option #2 would allow all offices to fit in the new addition. Engineer Lance stated that with Option #1 and #2, the Regional Office of Education (ROE) would stay at the Historic Courthouse, and informed the board that if the county fully vacates the building it would deteriorate rapidly.

Member Aumann asked if information could be located to confirm the cost of maintaining and upgrading the Historic Courthouse over the past 20 years, and stated that the county needs to look at the long range planning for this building.

Betty Rottinghaus stated that for over 80 years she has loved this building, but would rather see County Offices in several buildings rather than all housed in one building for security reasons.

Jim May of Hillsboro stated that the county should consider making the historical building more useful and not turn it into a warehouse. He noted that there is a lot of square footage here, and there has been no long-range plan for this building.

Chairman Plunkett stated that the county is also trying to get the Veteran's Assistance Commission in the New Building.

State's Attorney Matoush stated that there is no space for files at the new courthouse.

Health Department Administrator Hugh Satterlee stated that currently there are complaints that there is no parking around the Courthouse Complex, that maybe it would be better to buy land and build a new County Offices building to get the offices out of the Historic Courthouse, but to still maintain the building. He asked what offices are required to be in the Historic Courthouse and what offices are paying the County rent to be housed there.

Member Deabenderfer stated that the county may want to look at 21,000 square feet in additional office space and keep ROE and the County Board room in Historic Courthouse and leave the 3rd floor for storage.

Member Sielschott stated that everyone needs to keep the budget in mind.

Member Myers questioned whether a newly seated board could make a different choice and not keep any decision made by this board, and Chairman Plunkett responded they could.

Chairman Plunkett stated this meeting was made to give the Building and Grounds Committee direction on the best way to proceed, this is not a meeting to make any final decisions. He said that he understood that the consensus of the County Board members to be as Member Deabenderfer suggested: to instruct the Building and Grounds Committee to pursue the addition of not less than 21,000 square feet to the Courthouse Complex, while keeping the ROE and County Board room in the Historic Courthouse, using its 3rd floor only for storage space, and maintaining the Historic Courthouse building.

Nancy Slepicka from Hillsboro asked what the county's obligation is to the Regional Office of Education.

Member Sielschott stated that the State and the Federal Government gives money to ROE, but rent is not included in their grant money. Illinois Statutes require the County to provide housing for the ROE.

ADJOURN: The Regular monthly Full Board meeting will be held on *Tuesday, January 8th, 2008 at 8:30 AM* in the County Board Room.

Motion by Blankenship, second by Bathurst to adjourn the Special Full Board Meeting. **All in favor, motion carried.**

Meeting adjourned at 7:45 PM.

Minutes respectfully submitted and recorded by Montgomery County Clerk and Recorder Sandy Leitheiser.