

**Montgomery County Board
Special Meeting Minutes**

For Monday, September 26th, 2022 – 5:30 PM

The following are minutes of a special meeting of the Montgomery County Board held at 5:30 PM on Monday, September 26th, 2022.

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

Roll call was taken – 19 members present, 2 members absent.

Members Present: Russell Beason, Connie Beck, Bill Bergen, Ronald Deabenderfer, Doug Donaldson, Tim Fogle, Ken Folkerts, Mark Hughes, Jeremy Jones, David Loucks, Gene Miles, Ethan Murzynski, Andy Ritchie, Earlene Robinson, Bob Sneed, Richard Wendel, Patty Whitworth, Donna Yeske and Evan Young.

Members Absent: Megan Beeler and Sandra Johnson

Pledge of Allegiance to the flag was led by Health Department Director Hugh Satterlee.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE REPORT: Given by County Board members Bob Sneed and Gene Miles:

1. **Purchase New Mower for Maintenance Approval:** Sneed reported the mower for the Maintenance department has been in the shop a number of times. He said it is working now; however, he stated they don't know how much longer it is going to work. He said it could last for another ten years, and it could last for ten minutes. Sneed reported maintenance technician Phil Ernst received three quotes from Nail's Power Equipment for a new mower. One was a standard quote, the second included the trade-in of the old mower and the third included the hitch and front blade for snow removal. Sneed reported one proposal was with a \$725 trade in for the old mower, and Maintenance Tech Phil Ernst offered to purchase it himself so it could be used here as a backup if needed. **Motion by Hughes and second by Whitworth to purchase the mower without a trade-in.** Jones questioned if county property could be sold without bidding it out and Young said he could declare it as surplus. Further discussion took place on whether the county could sell surplus property to an individual, and Engineer Greenwood said surplus cannot be sold to an individual; it should be bid instead. Hughes and Whitworth rescinded their motion. **Motion by Hughes, second by Whitworth, to purchase the mower with trade-in and no snow blade for a price of \$9,270.** Sneed stated it's possible we could use the existing snow blade and hitch on the new mower. **All in favor, motion carried.**
2. **Approve Detour Agreement with Hillsboro Energy Approval:** Highway Engineer Greenwood reported he sent a revised Detour Agreement to the board members. He stated Hillsboro Energy would like to finish the job by the beginning of November. He said the work would be paid for completely by a private contractor. **Motion by Jones and second by Donaldson to approve the Detour Agreement with Hillsboro Energy.** Greenwood reported a section of Illinois Route 185 will be closed for approximately 21 days. Chad Fuson from Hillsboro Energy was present and said that residents who live near the area will still be allowed to leave and arrive at their homes, and he said Hillsboro Energy has also communicated with Graham Correctional Center management regarding their employee and visitor traffic, which will also be allowed. **All in favor, motion carried.**

FINANCE & BUDGET COMMITTEE REPORT: Given by Committee Chairman Russell Beason:

1. **America Recovery Plan Act (ARPA funding) Approval:** Beason reported the Finance and Budget Committee has met numerous times to discuss how to distribute the county's ARPA funds, and they hope to be nearing a resolution soon. He stated the committee received two sets of requests for funds: county and non-county requests. He said the committee previously discussed the possibility of using ARPA money to fund the non-county requests while using coal money to fund the county projects; however, some board members voiced concerns about spending down the coal reserves unnecessarily. He said when looking at non-county projects, the committee determined requests had to meet the top two criteria the board previously passed, which were: 1) Life Safety Deficiencies, and 2) Non-deferrable upgrades for efficiency. He stated the other three criteria were classified as 3) Operational mode for day-to-day operations, 4) Deferrable upgrades, maintenance and repair, and 5) Morale, welfare and recreation. He said requests falling into these categories were not considered. Beason stated the committee did not apply the same criteria to the county requests, however. When asked about his requests, Health Department Director Hugh Satterlee stated his projects were selected based on not otherwise having funds for them. Hughes stated he would prefer not to spend coal money at this time, and he asked Treasurer Nikki Lohman how much coal money she believed the county should keep in reserve. Lohman stated the auditors and Bellwether representatives both recommend keeping two years of operating expenses in reserve, which would be about \$16 million. She said there is about \$6 million in reserve at this time. Lohman also shared after her first month in office the coal mine shut down and it has been closed for two fires, plus we went through a pandemic which also adversely impacted the County finances. Lohman said her opinion is to invest the coal money and put it in the General Fund and decrease the Levy to save taxpayers money. Lohman also stated the ARPA grant has to be spent by 12/31/2026 and suggested getting additional input from the entities who submitted requests. She said they should be asked if there are any other grant funds available or if other options were checked out before asking for county ARPA funds. Lohman stated she never felt coal funds should be spent on her digitizing project, and the reason she submitted it for ARPA funds is because the ARPA grant should be used on Government services projects. Lohman added if the board chooses to use coal funds for county projects, she is going to take her project out of consideration. Deabenderfer stated he didn't remember the board voting to spend ARPA money on County projects first. Jones asked if the board was going to go down the list of projects one by one and vote on them at this meeting. Donaldson stated he does not feel comfortable taking action on any of the requests until he is able to read through the packets. He said the letter from Bellwether recommends board members take the time to look through the projects and rank them individually before submitting their rankings to the County Clerk. The letter then states the County Clerk tabulates the rankings and presents the final findings to the board. Members then discuss the results and make their funding decisions. Hughes said he believes the board should look at funding the county projects first and then turn their attention to the non-county projects if there is money left. Loucks stated municipalities got ARPA money just like the County did, and he believes the county should spend ARPA money on county projects first. County Clerk Sandy

Leitheiser asked if the project listings in the packets could be provided to those entities who submitted them to better identify the projects before County Board members did their ranking. Hughes asked Satterlee for clarification on his department's request for telephones. Satterlee said their department's phones are antiquated and need to be replaced. He stated based on the five requests being considered by the board, the panic button request would be his department's top priority. EMA director Kevin Schott said the top priority of his three requests would be the Starcom radios for communication. Yeske stated she believes the board members need to take the information home and look at it, then submit it to the County Clerk. County Clerk Sandy Leitheiser said she would be willing to assist with the tabulation process, but asked if the Coordinated Services office can also be included. Coordinated Services assistant David Jenkins said it was only a recommendation for board members to submit their rankings to the County Clerk, but they could be turned in to someone else. Young asked if Jenkins could keep track of the results. Jenkins said he could. **Motion by Yeske and second by Fogle to have board members take the ARPA request information home and rank the projects individually and submit them to Coordinated Services by October 5, 2022.** Loucks said the Finance and Budget Committee could go over the results if they are submitted before their October 7th meeting. **All in favor, motion carried.**

COORDINATING COMMITTEE: Given by Chairman Evan Young:

- 1. Committee Structure Approval:** Loucks stated he would like to split up the Infrastructure Committee by separating the Roads & Bridges and the Building & Grounds and putting Animal Control portions under the Buildings & Grounds. **Motion by Loucks and second by Yeske to create another committee in order to separate Roads & Bridges and Building & Grounds and to have Animal Control under the B & G Committee.** Robinson asked why animal control wouldn't go under Coordinating Committee because Young deals with animal control now. Loucks said he recommended it be done this way because they haven't spent a lot of time at their Infrastructure meetings on animal control. Deabenderfer said the Rules Committee recommended the current committee structure and he believes any further changes should first be approved by this committee as was done in past practice before going to the full board. He said he would like State's Attorney Andrew Affrunti to render an opinion on this procedure before moving forward with restructuring the committees again. Deabenderfer also said he believes the board should wait until December to make these changes since the board will be reorganizing then anyway. Young said the board made the changes with the idea they could be amended at any time if something wasn't working out. Sneed said he doesn't have a problem with waiting. Robinson said if you wait, you might as well wait until December. **Loucks rescinded his motion and Yeske rescinded her second.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS: None.

SCHEDULE CHANGES: None.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Citizen Bill Schroeder questioned the detour agreement the board approved. Specifically, he asked about item number 11 in the agreement which states “nothing in this Agreement shall be construed to be an admission by Hillsboro [Energy] of any liability for any claim made by the County.” He said this statement would seem to render any claim by the county of damage as worthless. Greenwood said he interpreted this item to say Hillsboro Energy is not responsible for any prior damage to the road. Citizen Karyl Dressen asked if more detail about agenda topics can be published in *The Journal News* so citizens will know if they should attend. Chairman Young stated the entire agenda is sent to all local media, and it is the newspaper’s discretion to decide what information is published.

ADJOURN: The next regular full board meeting will be on Tuesday, October 11th, 2022, at 5:30 p.m. in the County Board Room, Hillsboro, Illinois. Motion by Robinson and second by Donaldson to adjourn the Full Board Meeting. All in favor, motion carried.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:12 p.m. Minutes respectfully recorded and submitted by Montgomery County Clerk and Recorder Sandy Leitheiser.