Call to Order
Chair Winder called the meeting to order.

Roll Call and Pledge of Allegiance
Chair Winder, Vice Chair Makhija, and Commissioner DiBello were all present.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Montgomery County’s Coroner, Dr. Janine Darby.

Opening Commissioners’ Comments
Chair Winder:

- **Women’s History Month and International Women’s Day**
  - March is Women’s History Month, and tomorrow, Friday March 8th, is International Women’s Day
  - I want to spotlight and acknowledge Montgomery County women who are doing great things for our community, women currently elected to county government, and our female Row Officers
  - Also at the county level, there have been six female County Commissioners before me; this makes me the 7th female Commissioner, the 2nd female Chair, and the first Black Woman on the Board
  - At the local level, there are countless women serving at the municipal governments in Montgomery County
  - I want to thank these women who represent their communities and devote time to public service
  - It’s important to recognize these female leaders because although the United States is almost 250 years old, for almost half of that history, women could not even vote let alone stand for election
  - My grandmother was born in the year women were first able to cast ballots, so I think of and celebrate her in this moment
  - Thanks to our female Judges in the County for their commitment to service
Representation should reflect in our government as it does in our communities, so we can better serve one another.

We must always acknowledge the women that worked tirelessly for equal rights: to vote, to work, attend college, fair wage, workplace equality, and fought through discrimination.

These women persevered and broke the glass ceiling allowing for me to sit here today as a Commissioner.

As the County Chair, I vow to advocate for policies that create inclusive environments for women and families at work: family leave, affordable child care, and pay equity.

Montco is a great place to live, work, and raise a family and these policies are not a luxury, but a simple infrastructure of our society that allow working families to thrive and succeed.

**Uplifting Women Owned Businesses**

- In Montgomery County, we have many programs that support women: from our Small Business Grant Program through the Recovery Office that was specifically designed to support women, minority, and veteran-owned businesses.
- Angela Smith and Katie Jaworski, who are the owners/operators of Recycle Read Repeat here in Norristown, is one of the recipients of the pandemic recovery funding.
- They used the grant to establish community programs such as: a teen writing program, story time for kids, and made a donation to Norristown Library.
- Thank you for being here today and for all that you do for our community.
- Here are a few other inspiring women business owners in Montgomery County:
  - Annalisa Smithson of UnLeashed Counseling in Pottstown - The grant helped them to expand their mental health services in the County.
  - Annamarie Chestnut of Annamarie’s Place Restaurant in Royersford, recently celebrated her 30th year in business.
- Women’s History is not ancient history; we are living through history-making moments every day.
- I look forward to visiting some of our county’s women-owned businesses this month and highlighting more women in history on our social media.

**Montgomery County Women’s Commission**

- I’m pleased to announce the 2024 launch of the Montgomery County Commission for Women.
- Thank you to Donna Richemond, Chief of Diversity Equity and Inclusion for reigniting the Commission.
- The goal of the Commission is to represent the interests and concerns of women of all races, ages, ethnic and social backgrounds, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability and social circumstances.
- This Commission will encompass the concerns and needs of women, girls, and those who identify as female.
- The Women’s Commission will be a platform for assessing and guiding the County’s efforts to enhance services for women and girls across all demographics.
We aim to pinpoint and boost opportunities for women in business and entrepreneurship, address bias and discrimination, and foster safe communities promoting gender equality and eradicating violence against women.

Diverse perspectives on the Commission are crucial for achieving these objectives.

Applications are open, now through March 28th.

We are looking for any community members who live or work in Montgomery County and who want a role and a voice in improving the lives of women and girls in Montgomery County.

To apply for the Commission, visit: www.montgomerycountypa.gov/WomensCommission

Vice Chair Makhija:

- **Women’s History Month**

  We have so many women to acknowledge and much to celebrate during Women’s History Month.

  Thanks to some of the women at various government levels who made history here in the county that inspired me to now be Chair of the Board of Elections.

  As Commissioner, I will continue to support implementing policies that will positively affect people’s lives that work and live in Montco by providing adequate paid leave for families and increased access to affordable child care.

- **Voter Hall of Fame**

  It’s important to recognize the history of the women’s suffrage, and to tell the whole story of what it took to get here today for safeguarding voting rights.

  We must continue to guard against any retrenchments towards fundamental voting rights.

  The state has established the Voter Hall of Fame.

  This initiative serves to recognize citizens/voters who have voted in 50 consecutive elections.

  It takes a specific civic-minded person to vote in every election over many years.

  We are looking to recognize different categories for young people who have voted in every election since turning 18 years of age, and people who have voted in every primary and general election by the time of turning 50 years of age.

  We look forward to hosting this event and celebrating individuals here at the County for upholding voter rights and setting an example for the rest of the community.

Commissioner DiBello:
Women’s History Month

- Today we recognize all the successes of women at all levels throughout history and today in public service here at the County
- Supporting our staff and their families by implementing extended family leave and affordable child care policies is priority for me

Veteran Acknowledgment

- Paul Houck is a hard working county employee and former US Navy-man who is receiving the Veteran’s Certificate of Appreciation by going above and beyond the call of duty
- He was honored by the US Department of Veteran’s Affairs thanks to his work with the Coatesville VA Medical Center Homeless Outreach Team
- Paul is a driver with the Office of Veteran’s Services and assisted with the transport of an unhoused family of 4 with multiple disabilities to a shelter
- Without hesitation, Paul immediately came to pick up the family to escort them to a welcoming space
- Just recently Paul transported a Veteran to a surgery procedure and will be picking that same Vet up today after our meeting
- Paul’s expeditious response and respectful service is being commended by the lives he’s touched, the Outreach Team, the US Department of Veterans Affairs, and also here in Montgomery County
- On behalf of the County Commissioners, we are proud to award Paul with a Commendation Certificate of Service
- Thanks to you, the Office of Veteran’s Affairs, and everyone who works to support our service members and Veterans

Chair Winder mentioned the start of Ramadan begins on the evening of March 10th for our community members who participate in this time of fasting and prayer. May peace and blessings be with you and your family during this time.

Announcements, Commendations, Presentations & Reports

1. Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month – Dr. Tamra Williams, Director of Montgomery County Health & Human Services

Public Comment on Today’s Pending Votes, Resolutions, Bids, RFP’s, and Contracts – Limited to 3 Minutes

(Speakers may comment on matters that appear on today’s agenda that the Commissioners will consider at this meeting, listed in items F through J. All public comments must be relevant, or “germane,” to County business. This means that the subject matter of all comments must be limited to items or issues which are currently before the Commissioners for consideration. Speakers may present once during the comment period on agenda items.)

1. Marilyn Muier commented on the voter services contract award for staffing, election training and duties, poll workers residency-citizenship concerns,
government transparency, election oversight, and opposes the potential use of ice cream trucks to cure ballots.

2. David Morgan commented on mental health concerns, and the budget for the Justice Center project.

3. Deb Spence commented on the contract award for voter services and Election Day staffing.

**Approval of the Minutes**
Chair Winder made a motion to approve the February 22, 2024 minutes of the Montgomery County Board of Commissioners’ meeting.

Vice Chair Makhija seconded the motion.

There was no Board comment. There was no public comment. Chair Winder brought the motion to a vote, and it was adopted with all in favor and none opposed.

**Resolutions**

**Commissioners’ Appointment of the Montgomery County Solicitor**
Chair Winder made a motion that Benjamin H. Field be appointed as Montgomery County Solicitor beginning on April 15, 2024.

Commissioner DiBello seconded the motion.

Chair Winder is elated to welcome Ben to the County’s Legal Team and Senior Staff. Ben’s professional experience will be a tremendous asset to the Commissioners’ Office. In addition, Chair Winder thanked Ray McGarry for service to the County as Interim Solicitor for the past 7 months with help navigating the complexities of this office, counsel, and friendship.

Vice Chair Makhija thanked Ray McGarry for his service and willingness to step up as County Solicitor especially during the transitioning of a new administration. Vice Chair Makhija added that he is elated for Ben’s arrival to the County; Ben has extraordinary innovative work experience as a Chief Solicitor, and will be a great asset to the Montgomery County team.

Commissioner DiBello mentioned he is looking forward to Ben becoming a part of the Montgomery County Team as an experienced professional.

**Commissioners’ Appointment and Re-appointments to the Montgomery County Board of Assessment Appeal**
Chair Winder made a motion that Olivia Haywood be appointed and Joseph Foster and Patrick Costello be re-appointed to the Montgomery County Board of Assessment Appeals for terms to begin immediately and to expire on December 31, 2027; and to
serve at the pleasure of the County Commissioners, and in accordance with the current duly-adopted By-Laws.

Vice Chair Makhija seconded the motion.

*Chair Winder commented on appointing the first woman of color to this Board with knowledge in this space and that Olivia has been serving the county for some time now as an experienced professional.*

*Vice Chair Makhija congratulated Olivia, and commented that she will bring a specific knowledge based skill set with representation to this Board.*

There was no further Board comment. There was no public comment. Chair Winder brought resolutions #1-2 to a vote, and it was adopted with all in favor and none opposed. The full text of the resolutions 24.C 31-32 can be found [here](#).

**Personnel**  
**March 7, 2024, Personnel List – Chief Human Resources Officer, Catherine Halen**

Chair Winder made a motion to approve the March 7, 2024, Personnel presentation as given by Chief Human Resources Officer, Catherine Halen and to authorize the proper County Officials to execute the same.

Commissioner DiBello seconded the motion.

There was no Board comment. There was no public comment. Chair Winder brought the motion to a vote, and it was adopted with all in favor and none opposed.

**Advertisement of Bids, RFP’s, and RFI’s – Exhibit A**

Chair Winder made a motion to approve the Advertisement of Bids and RFP’s for Montgomery County on attached Exhibit A, and to authorize the proper County Officials to execute the same, subject to the approval of the County Solicitor.

Commissioner DiBello seconded the motion.

There was no Board comment. There was no public comment. Chair Winder brought the motion to a vote, and it was adopted with all in favor and none opposed. The full text of the resolution 24.C-33 can be found [here](#).

**Awards of Contract – Montgomery County – Exhibit B**

Commissioner DiBello made a motion to approve the Contract Awards, Amendments, and Renewals for Montgomery County on attached Exhibit B, excluding contract #1, and to authorize the proper County Officials to execute the same, subject to the approval of the County Solicitor.
Chair Winder seconded the motion.

Chair Winder made a motion to approve contract #1.

Vice Chair Makhija seconded the motion.

Commissioner DiBello requested an exclusion of contract #1 due to exploring other options such as hybrids, concerns with the infrastructure for electric vehicle sustainability, unsolidified process and procedures, and not willing to support spending tax payer money on the EV industry yet.

Vice Chair Makhija added prioritizing government transitioning into clean energy, using new sustainable technology, and avoiding harmful contaminants to our environment is imperative; its incumbent upon Montgomery County to step up and show leadership through purchasing power that relies on cleaner energy-emissions while decreasing our carbon footprint. Vice Chair Makhija concluded that we can still accomplish the same objectives with the electric vehicle, which is better for the environment and reduces gas purchases.

Chair Winder commented that this matter is a key policy area for Commissioner Makhija and I, and that being cost conscience with comparisons will continue to be a priority for this Board.

Commissioner DiBello reiterated that the electric vehicle industry is still in flux-not yet fully established, and that federal standards and initiatives on EV’s have changed. Commissioner DiBello concluded that he is in favor of supporting the environment, but the EV industry is still new and we need to focus more on proper spending of tax payer money.

Vice Chair Makhija mentioned that carbon emissions factor into the frequent environmental flooding.

Chair Winder concluded that this Board will do it’s diligence on how we appropriate tax payer dollars and explore the County’s role in climate change.

Chair Winder requested a roll call vote for contract award #1.

There was no further Board comment. There was no public comment. Chair Winder brought the motion to a roll call vote for contract award #1, with Chair Winder and Vice Chair Makhija voting “aye”, and Commissioner DiBello “opposed” for contract award #1. The motion was adopted 2 to 1. The full text of the resolutions 24.C-34 can be found here.

General Public Comment – Limited to 3 minutes

(Speakers may comment on matters that are or may be before the Board of
Commissioners. All public comments must be relevant, or “germane,” to County business. This means that the subject matter of all comments must be limited to items or issues which are currently before the Commissioners for consideration, or which may come before the Commissioners for consideration at a future meeting. Speakers may present once during the general public comment period.)

1. Arthur Herring commented on guardianship, senior care, and the Montgomery County Orphan’s Court process.
2. Charles Dykes commented on dog training programs and events to be held in Norristown Farm Park.
3. Jim Mullet commented on election integrity, Election Day signature verification, and voter roll maintenance.
4. Jenny Reimschneider commented on guardianship, Orphan’s Court process, and senior care.
5. Marlene Laska thanked the Commissioners for election integrity, and commented on election-transparency, precinct ballot counting, voter services staffing, and Election-day security procedures.
   Commissioner DiBello commented on randomly selecting municipalities to count and audit ballots to maintain election integrity and security.
   Vice Chair Makhija mentioned that Montgomery County elections are secure because who votes is public knowledge, so it’s capable of being audited by anyone to flag any fraud or irregularities.

6. David Winkler thanked the Commissioners for their work as elected officials and the supporting staff here at the County. Mr. Winkler added that he is a republican congressional candidate with concerns about the election process, preserving election integrity, restoring public trust in the election process, maintaining clean voter rolls, limiting election disenfranchising, and protecting civil liberties and farms from foreign governance.
   Chair Winder mentioned that this Board takes farm preservation seriously and we equally support franchising voters.

7. David Morgan commented on homelessness within the county, substance abuse, and the Justice Center Project budget.
8. Barbara Ferman commented on Women’s History month, the inception of Title 9 to allow women equal access to sports, her experience as a Judge of Election, and finalizing ballot counts at the precincts on Election Day.
9. Adrienne Seltzer commented on Election Day results, getting a more detailed agenda, and thanked the Commissioners and elected officials for their work.
10. Deb Spence commented in favor of having a public platform at Board meetings to express concerns as a constituent of Montgomery County, supporting and respecting women in leadership, and celebrating Women’s History month.
Vice Chair Makhija stated that it’s an honor to govern alongside Chair Winder to build inclusive spaces with respect and support for each other’s leadership style.

11. Fred Dugan commented on meeting with Commissioner Makhija to discuss voter turnout for elections.
12. Deborah Chaiken commented on the Department of Aging processes with intervention and guardianship services from state to local level management.

Closing Commissioners’ Comments
Commissioner DiBello raised the concern of good citizenship in all public meetings, keeping election campaigns civil, not attacking people personally, and finding ways to respectfully disagree. Commissioner DiBello added that it’s a pleasure to serve with Chair Winder, and as leaders of this County we take an honorable approach with each other’s opinions, promote healthy banter, and take strides to work together effectively.

Vice Chair Makhija expressed agreement with Commissioner DiBello's sentiment, and acknowledges that as leaders we get our points across respectfully to set the right tone of leadership for the County.

Vice Chair Makhija also acknowledged Ramadan as a time for reflection, prayer, and fasting; and wished the Muslim community a spiritual month of peace with an easy fast.

Upcoming Meeting Dates
1. Board of Commissioners’ Meeting – Thursday, March 21, 2024, at 10am
2. Election Board Meeting following the Board meeting

Adjournment
On motion of Chair Winder, seconded by Commissioner DiBello, the March 7, 2024 meeting of the Montgomery County Board of Commissioners was adjourned.

There was no Board comment. There was no public comment. Chair Winder brought the motion to a vote, and the Montgomery County Board of Commissioners meeting was adjourned with all in favor and none opposed.

Salary Board
Public Comment on Salary Board – Limited to 3 Minutes
There was no public comment.

Salary Board
Chair Winder motioned to approve the March 7, 2024, Salary Board presentation as given by Chief Human Resources Officer, Catherine Halen, and to authorize the proper County Officials to execute the same.

Commissioner DiBello seconded the motion.
There was no Board comment. There was no public comment. Chair Winder brought the motion to a vote and the March 7, 2024, Salary Board was adopted with all in favor and none opposed.

**Adjournment**
On motion of Chair Winder, seconded by Controller Sanchez, the March 7, 2024, meeting of the Montgomery County Salary Board was adjourned.

There was no Board comment. There was no public comment. Chair Winder brought the motion to a vote, and the Montgomery County Salary Board meeting was adjourned with all in favor and none opposed.

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