

Call to Order

The Aitkin County Board of Commissioners met the 14th day of April, 2026 at 9:00 a.m. at the Aitkin Government Center with the following members present in the meeting room: Board Chair J. Mark Wedel, Commissioners Laurie Westerlund, Travis Leiviska, and Bret Sample. Commissioner Michael Kearney was present via interactive technology due to an out-of-town commitment and was seen and heard in the meeting room. Also present were County Administrator David Minke and Administrative Assistant April Kellerman.

Approval of Agenda

Motion made by Commissioner Sample, seconded by Commissioner Westerlund and upon a roll call vote carried 5-0 to approve the April 14, 2026 agenda, as amended with the following: corrections to item 2B, additional information provided for item 5A, addition of item 9B, and addition of item 14B.

There was no Citizens' Public Comment.

Consent Agenda

Motion by Commissioner Leiviska, seconded by Commissioner Kearney and upon a roll call vote carried 5-0 to approve the Consent Agenda, with the corrections to item 2B, as follows:

- A) Correspondence File Acknowledge - March 24, 2026 to April 13, 2026;
- B) Approve March 24, 2026 County Board Minutes;
- C) Approve Auditor Vouchers – Auditor Warrants paid 03.20.26: Health & Human Services \$216,170.20, Opioid Remediation Settlement \$5,000.00 for a total of \$221,170.20;
- D) Adopt Resolution #20260414-043: LG214 Premises Permits – McGregor Lions Club;
- E) Approve Commissioner Vouchers – Commissioner Warrants paid 03.27.26: General Fund \$154,039.80, Road & Bridge \$42,858.91, Trust \$14,660.87, Forest Development \$4,290.13, Taxes & Penalties \$333.00, Long Lake Conservation Center \$5,636.80, Parks \$106,071.00 for a total of \$327,890.51;
- F) Approve Auditor Vouchers – Auditor Warrants paid 03.27.26: Road & Bridge \$169,333.00;
- G) Approve Auditor Vouchers – Auditor Warrants paid 03.27.26: General Fund \$18.47, Health & Human Services \$33,281.12, Opioid Remediation Settlement \$17,039.91 for a total of \$50,339.50;
- H) Information Only – 2026 Lower Potency Edible Registration;
- I) Approve Manual Warrants paid 03.30.26: General Fund \$1,200.25;
- J) Approve Manual Warrants paid 03.31.26: General Fund \$1,047.97;
- K) Approve Manual Warrants/Voids/Corrections – Elan paid 03.12.26: Health & Human Services \$9,296.26, General Fund \$8,250.09, Long Lake Conservation Center \$259.92 for a total of \$17,806.27;
- L) Approve Auditor Vouchers – Auditor Warrants paid 04.03.26: Health & Human Services \$568,608.84;
- M) Adopt Resolution #20260414-044: 2025 Annual Apportionment Percentages of Forfeited Tax Sales;
- N) Adopt Resolution #20260414-045: LG220 App for Exempt Permit - Woodland Chapter MN Deer Hunters Association;
- O) Adopt Resolution #20260414-046: 2025 Disbursement to Auditor and Gravel Pit Account;
- P) Approve Electronic Funds Transfers Report thru 03.31.26 totaling \$11,554,702.23;
- Q) Approve Consumption & Display Permits - Paddy's Wild Rice Farm LLC dba Palisade Flats Hunt Club;

- R) Approve Affidavit for Duplicate of Lost Warrant - #96385 Glen's Sign Design \$360.00;
- S) Adopt Resolution #20260414-047: Detour Agreement No. 1062639 with the State of Minnesota, Department of Transportation;
- T) Approve Commissioner Vouchers – Commissioner Warrants paid 04.10.26: General Fund \$328,214.05, Reserves Fund \$1,109.30, Road & Bridge \$158,531.06, Trust \$10,909.72, Forest Development \$87.28, Long Lake Conservation Center \$6,331.58, Parks \$9,181.62, Coronavirus Relief Fund \$15,500.00 for a total of \$529,864.61;
- U) Approve 2026 Federal Boating Safety Equipment Grant in the amount of \$53,101.41;
- V) Approve MNIT (Minnesota IT Services) Cybersecurity Services Contract;
- W) Approve Auditor Vouchers – Auditor Warrants – Sales/Use & Diesel Tax paid 04.10.26: General Fund \$141.04, Road & Bridge \$1,318.78, Long Lake Conservation Center \$85.54, Parks \$141.80 for a total of \$1,687.16;
- X) Approve Manual Warrants/Voids/Corrections – ELAN paid 03.26.26: General Fund \$4,744.30, Long Lake Conservation Center \$1,538.23, Road & Bridge \$294.82, Health & Human Services \$221.87 for a total of \$6,799.22;
- Y) Approve Auditor Vouchers – Auditor Warrants paid 04.10.26: Road & Bridge \$4,539.58;

Regular Agenda

Veronica Lundquist – District Outreach Coordinator for Aitkin County Soil & Water Conservation District presented information on the Mississippi River Diversion Channel. The channel is a 6.25 mile passive flood control system completed in 1956.

Motion by Commissioner Leiviska, seconded by Commissioner Kearney and upon a roll call vote carried 5-0 to Approve Appointment of Commissioners Westerlund and Sample to the Election Canvassing Board for 2026.

Motion by Commissioner Sample, seconded by Commissioner Westerlund and upon a roll call vote carried 5-0 to Approve Personnel Committee Recommendations of hiring a full-time Social Worker (new position) for a period of up to two years, with costs shared 50:50 with Crow Wing County, and to authorize the Board Chair and County Administrator to sign a shared employee agreement.

Motion by Commissioner Sample, seconded by Commissioner Leiviska and upon a roll call vote carried 5-0 to modify Article VIII F of the Personnel Policy by changing the name to “Employee Recognition” and authorizing the county administrator to approve certain expenditures. Update including editing the policy title from Employee Recognition “Service Awards” to Employee Recognition Policy and adding #6 as outlined as: The County Board authorizes the County Administrator to use budgeted funds and, where available, forfeited flexible benefit funds to support employee appreciation, recognition, and wellness activities. This may include events such as the annual National Association of Counties (NACo) County Government Month appreciation event, other recognition events, training events, as well as reasonable costs for meals, refreshments, certificates, plaques, and related items necessary to carry out these activities.

Motion by Commissioner Leiviska, seconded by Commissioner Westerlund and upon a roll call vote carried 5-0 to Approve Individual Disaster Abatements and Credits.

Mike Dangers – County Assessor presented the Annual Assessment Summary Report.

John Welle – County Engineer presented information from the MnDOT Intersection Control Evaluation (ICE) Report for the intersection of State Highways 169 and 210 in the city of Aitkin.

Dennis Thompson – Land Commissioner presented the Aitkin County Land Department 2025 Budget Review.

Thompson presented the 2025 Campground Summary.

Chair Wedel called a recess at 11:05 a.m.

The Board reconvened at 11:10 a.m.

Motion by Commissioner Sample, seconded by Commissioner Westerlund and upon a roll call vote carried 5-0 to Approve Wireless Sales Agreements (MEI Connect) between MEI Total Elevator Solutions and Aitkin County for telephone services in elevators located in the Government Center, Judicial Center, Sheriff's Office and Health & Human Services for a total of \$5,136.00 for the first 12 months.

Jim Bright – Facilities Coordinator provided a brief update on Health & Human Services building renovation.

Motion by Commissioner Sample, seconded by Commissioner Leiviska and upon a roll call vote carried 5-0 to Approve the recommendation of the Economic Development Committee to Award Business Development & Recreation Grants totaling \$6,000.00 to the following: Women Leading the Way Event - \$2,000, Farm to Fridge at the Beanery - \$2,000, and Food as Medicine Speaker Series - \$2,000.

Motion by Commissioner Westerlund, seconded by Commissioner Kearney and upon a roll call vote carried 5-0 to Approve the recommendation of the Economic Development Committee to Award Revitalization Grants totaling \$16,600.00 to the following: McGregor VFW \$1,600 MacDonald Enterprises \$5,000 Rialto Theatre \$5,000 Petal & Leaf Nursery \$5,000.

Julie Ring – Executive Director Minnesota Association of Counties provided the AMC Executive Director Report.

Motion by Commissioner Westerlund, seconded by Commissioner Sample and upon a roll call vote carried 5-0 to Approve the following summary of County Administrator Minke's March 24 performance review: Commissioners reviewed Administrator Minke's performance in the areas of Professional Knowledge, Leadership and Ethics, Communication, Financial Management and Budget, Human Resources and Organizational Culture, and Intergovernmental Relations. Commissioners concluded that Administrator Minke met or exceeded expectations in these areas.

AITKIN COUNTY BOARD

April 14, 2026

The Board discussed: Aitkin Airport Commission, Big Sandy Lake Management Plan, Economic Development, H&HS Advisory, McGregor Airport Commission, Mississippi Headwaters Board, MN Rural Counties, Personnel, AMC Leadership Summit, Community Health Board.

The Board also discussed attendance for the upcoming tour of Long Lake Conservation Center. The consensus was that a quorum would not be present so a special meeting was not needed.

Adjourn

Motion by Commissioner Westerlund, seconded by Commissioner Leiviska and upon a roll call vote carried 5-0 to adjourn the meeting at 12:21 p.m. with the next regular meeting on Tuesday, April 28, 2026 at the Aitkin County Government Center.

J. Mark Wedel, Board Chair
Aitkin County Board of Commissioners

David J. Minke, County Administrator
Clerk to the County Board