



# Board of County Commissioners Agenda Request

3A  
Agenda Item #

**Requested Meeting Date:** January 23, 2018

**Title of Item:** 2018 Legislative Session

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> REGULAR AGENDA	<b>Action Requested:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Direction Requested
<input type="checkbox"/> CONSENT AGENDA	<input type="checkbox"/> Approve/Deny Motion	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussion Item
<input type="checkbox"/> INFORMATION ONLY	<input type="checkbox"/> Adopt Resolution (attach draft) <i>*provide copy of hearing notice that was published</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Hold Public Hearing*

<b>Submitted by:</b> Jessica Seibert	<b>Department:</b> Administration
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<b>Presenter (Name and Title):</b> Representative Dale Lueck	<b>Estimated Time Needed:</b> 20 to 30 minutes
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**Summary of Issue:**

Representative Dale Lueck will be present to answer questions and hear any concerns the Board may have for the upcoming Legislative Session.

**Alternatives, Options, Effects on Others/Comments:**

**Recommended Action/Motion:**

**Financial Impact:**

Is there a cost associated with this request?  Yes  No

What is the total cost, with tax and shipping? \$

Is this budgeted?  Yes  No *Please Explain:*



## Issue Priorities 2018

*Reflects First Priority Ranking by Members*

*Reported to Board / January 8, 2018*

### **Top Four:**

- 1) Support AMC Mental Health Bonding Proposal.
- 2) Bring adequate reliable broadband access to all corners of the state.
- 3) Support County Relief for Potential Tax Court Success by Utilities Challenging DOR Rates.
- 4) Support a long-term transportation funding package with a strong focus on local roads that are adequately funded primarily with constitutionally protected revenues.

### **Others Receiving Consideration:**

- \*Address workforce and rural economic development needs by funding Greater MN Brain Gain pilot project.
- \*Increase mortgage deed tax.
- \*Support beaver control cost-share.
- \*Address acquisition of productive private lands with public funds.
- \* Support Relief for Dark Store appraisals.
- \*Establish acquisition mechanism for buffers.

\*Legislative Priorities for the year will be finalized at the February 5 meeting

# 2018 Aitkin County Legislative Priorities by Department

## Assessor

1. Repeal of the Statute that requires field appraisers to have the AMA license. This is Minnesota Statute 270C.9901. This law should be repealed because small rural counties have no need for this level of licensure. It will likely exacerbate a shortage of rural appraisers that perform assessment functions. The County Board passed a resolution supporting this back in 2014.
2. Simplification of the property tax system. We should support legislation that would reduce the number of classifications of property in Minnesota. When assessors spend lots of time classifying property, they have less time available to value property. The complexity makes the system difficult for most people to understand. Many other states have much simpler systems.
3. Any new program mandated by the State should be funded by the State.

## Attorney's Office

1. Additional sustainable (on-going) funding for County Attorneys for child protection.
2. Additional sustainable (on-going) funding for County Attorneys for the state judiciary's shift of a substantial amount of court administration duties to the County Attorneys' Offices.

## Community Corrections

1. Aitkin County supports increased funding for community corrections. Overall, the costs of core correctional services are increasingly borne by the 33 CCA counties due to having the highest number of clients under supervision compared to the other two models of supervision. Minnesota is now ranked 49<sup>th</sup> lowest in state funding of correctional community supervision, with only 2.7% of the state budget spent on community supervision. We are grateful for the progress made in the last biennium toward increased funding for the Community Corrections Act, however there is still only about \$1 million more in funds than there was in 2002. This research around evidence-based practices is demanding increased attention to offender risk and needs assessment, case planning, and targeting interventions specific to client needs; these cannot be implemented effectively without increased financial support at the state level. Minnesota counties will not be able to sustain current efforts to utilize proven evidence-based practices without increased state funding.
2. Aitkin County supports the need for an equitable and transparent funding model that considers the needs of all 87 counties to ensure fair distribution of funds across all county lines.
3. Aitkin County supports an evaluation of probation lengths as part of more consistent sentencing practices to ensure fair treatment of clients under supervision.

4. Aitkin County supports statutory language revisions to allow claims related to Sentenced to Service (STS) injuries to continue to be paid by the state even in cases where the offender is working off supervision or other fees.
5. Aitkin County supports increased state funding for implementation of a full continuum of mental health services available to offenders at the local community level.
6. Aitkin County supports any alcohol impact fees that are approved should be allocated in the health and public safety areas most impacted by costs related to alcohol and other drug abuse (including prescription and over-the-counter drugs) as well as alcohol and drug-related injuries. The key areas of supervision are chemical dependency prevention, screening, treatment and aftercare services related to alcohol.

## Economic Development

1. Funding for the Border to Border Grant fund be set at \$1,000,000.00. For communities that are un-served by the State of MN definition, the current 50/50 match be lowered to a 30/70 match. This would allow more Border to Border Broadband grant funds to be utilized in areas that are most in need.
2. Increased funding for the State Grant In Aid (GIA) trails for ATV use. ATV riding is a fast growing family activity and current GIA funding is not keeping up for trail construction or maintenance.
3. Approval of the Mille Lacs Area ATV Trail expansion to the Northwood's ATV Trail System. This would connect the East shore of Mille Lacs Lake and the Malmo areas to Isle and the Northwood's ATV Trail system at the Soo Line and Solana Loop.

## Environmental Services

1. 2017 MN Solid Waste Administrators Association Policy Platform: SWAA supports efforts to make improvements that would maximize the e-waste recycling program. Additionally, SWAA supports the use of manufacturer payments to help reimburse county collection efforts.
2. MACPZA supports increased state funding to accelerate the state-mapping program to accurately identify non-metallic mineral deposits that have the potential to be economically mined.
3. MACPZA supports administering and allocating current NRBG funding for mandated state programs through the Minnesota Department of Revenue, similar to County Program Aid. Allocations for mandated state programs through the NRBG should not be considered grants.
4. MACPZA supports state funding to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources for purposes of establishing ordinary high water and 100 year flood elevations on public waters.

## Health & Human Services

1. Aitkin County supports the need to reallocate dollars originally associated with Anoka Metro Regional Treatment Center (AMRTC) to invest in a mental health infrastructure.
2. Aitkin County supports legislative language to eliminate the cost sharing responsibilities associated with AMRTC and reallocating to community mental health resources.
3. Aitkin County supports a bill to authorize continued funding at an increased level for the Minnesota Eligibility Technology System (METS)
4. Aitkin County supports DHS transparency in time study formulas.
5. Aitkin County supports increased housing options and services for children/teens with behaviors.
6. Aitkin County supports improving reliability and systems of the DHS MN Choices program.

Specific to the AMRTC Issues- here is additional information:

Proposals to use the county cost share associated with the Anoka Metro Regional Treatment Center (AMRTC) to invest in mental health infrastructure and services are likely to continue to come forward. Recall that Governor Dayton's budget proposal suggests directing a portion of the current county cost share to a grant program for counties to build and expand community-based mental health infrastructure. This week, the Minnesota Hospital Association introduced similar legislation that would direct \$10 million of the cost share to hospitals, nonprofits and/or counties for infrastructure investments. We also know that NAMI is likely to come forward with a proposal to direct that funding.

In order to best position counties, AMC and MACSSA will be introducing a bill to sunset the existing county cost share and to direct the current cost share to counties for mental health investments. The county lobbying team will be working this week to coordinate bill drafting and recruit legislative authors.

### ISSUES:

1. When an individual is receiving care at the Anoka-Metro Regional Treatment Center (AMRTC) or a Community Behavioral Health Hospital (CBHH) and no longer requires the high level of care these programs provide, counties are responsible for 100 percent of the cost.
2. While the recent increases in county shares have facilitated more proactive discharge planning on the part of counties, they have also created significant financial pressure on county budgets and highlighted barriers related to finding community placements for people once they no longer need care at a state-operated facility.
3. Currently, all of the revenue collected from counties for cost of care goes back into the state's General Fund, where it supports the entire range of state-funded priorities rather than specifically helping to address the underlying issues leading people to stay in state-operated facilities when they don't need that level of care.

## Highway Department

### 1. Local Road Improvement Program/Local Bridge Bonding Program

Aitkin County supports immediate funding of the Local Road Improvement Program and the Local Bridge Bonding Program to fund regionally significant local road and bridge projects throughout the state.

### 2. Increase in Highway Funding

Aitkin County supports long term, sustainable transportation funding increases distributed through the Highway User Tax Distribution Fund by increases in the state gas tax and license tab fees. Aitkin County also supports dedicating the existing sales tax revenue on motor vehicle parts to the Highway User Tax Distribution Fund.

## Human Resources

1. State Unemployment – Update eligibility criteria to ensure employees who voluntarily resign or retire are not later deemed eligible for unemployment benefits charged to the employer, if they have not held subsequent employment. Example: Employee voluntarily resigned, was brought back temporarily to train in new hire, then filed for unemployment and was approved. Update eligibility to include an end date for eligibility when hours are reduced so the claim does not continue to accrue for multiple years on end (LLCC). Update eligibility to ensure employees who resign instead of going through an investigation, following alleged crimes being committed against the employer (i.e. theft), should not be eligible to receive unemployment. Update eligibility criteria so that limited term jobs, seasonal/summer temps jobs, and election clerks do not trigger unemployment eligibility.
2. Employers are required to promote the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) Program annually and to every new hire. Remove this mandate. Allow information to be placed on the intranet.
3. Public Employment Relations Board (new). The 2016 Minnesota Legislature delayed until July 1, 2017 the PERB's authority to hear Unfair Labor Practice Charges (ULPs). The 2017 Minnesota Legislature delayed until July 1, 2020 the PERB's authority to hear Unfair Labor Practice Charges (ULPs). Parties may file ULPs in District Court until July 1, 2020. This PERB board has been underfunded. Commit one way or the other – either eliminate it and allow unfair labor practices to continue being handled by the courts, or fund it appropriately to get it up and running. Final rules. Concern that ULP charges may increase under this new model (simple process, no filing fee, etc.).
4. Pay Equity – eliminate the need for pay equity reporting for all employers that have a uniform wage scale and no employees placed either below the MIN or above the MAX.
5. Oppose statewide paid family leave that is funded similar to unemployment insurance with a tax assessed on employees and employers. Maintain local control. Aitkin County already provides generous paid sick leave, vacation/PTO, and personal leave benefits to employees that can be accrued and used for this purpose.
6. Require the State to go through all of the mandates that require county staff training, and have the State develop a condensed online video training library –partnering with OSHA and the federal government as necessary– so the counties can access a free training library 24/7/365. The trainings can be shown to existing staff and to new hires during orientation, and would ensure all MN counties had access to the same training info, law changes, legislative updates, etc. -- and would provide efficiencies and reduce local

costs because all staff could take the training in a staff meeting or at their desk (instead of traveling long distances across the State to obtain the required trainings).

7. Develop a system to allow county HR staff, with training, electronic access to the BCA system for running immediate/onsite criminal background checks to expedite recruitments. Currently, we are required to mail requests and it can take a week or more to receive the results.
8. Clearly state in the law that County Boards (and city/township/school) are allowed to discuss non-union wages and benefits in closed session too, in addition to union negotiations strategy.
9. Public Employee Insurance Program (PEIP) groups (Aitkin County offers PEIP) are exempt from the health insurance bidding law which requires employers to bid every 60 months. PEIP also offers dental insurance and life insurance. Recommend the State offer a short-term disability, long-term disability, and vision plan, also exempt from the bidding law and that pools MN public-sector employees benefits together to obtain the best purchasing power.

## Land Department

1. Bonding proposal for ATV trail east side of Mille Lacs (\$1.5-million with a \$150,000 match)
2. Outdoor Heritage (Legacy) funds to support RELC's (i.e. Long Lake CC) – if we're acquiring/protecting lands for our future, it would seem like educating our youth about the "outdoors" should be a priority.
3. Outdoor Heritage (Legacy) funds to support updating forest inventory on County/State lands – how can we protect/enhance habitat if we have irregular data on what we currently have?
4. Support legislation allowing all tax-forfeited land to be sold via sealed bids (currently oral bid or on-line only bid).
5. Address tax-forfeited blight clean-up costs.
6. Support state funding for beaver control.

## Recorder's Office

1. Set minimum deed tax to \$3.30 from \$1.65 (considerations equal to \$1,000 and \$500) so it matches when a Certificate of Real Estate Value is required. Alternately, repeal minimum deed tax so offices do not have to collect \$1.65 when no money is changing hands.
2. Require that deed in fulfillment of contracts reference contract recording information and consideration to ensure proper deed tax is being collected on fulfillment. Allow Certificate of Real Estate for fulfillment to be "reused" from contract if no terms have changed (currently one needs to be filed with contract and with deed).

## Sheriff's Office

1. Pursue legislation that would prohibit firearms in county buildings where court services occur.

## Treasurer's Office

1. Under Return of state fees - Suggest adding Marriage License fees to be retained by the county as the state receives most of the revenue but all the work is done in my office.
2. Have Mobile Homes returned to tabs issued by the DVM rather than being taxed thru the property tax system or raising the value threshold for them to be taxed thru the property tax system.