



SNAKE RIVER
WATERSHED MANAGEMENT BOARD

903 Forest Ave E • Mora, MN • 55051 • (320) 679-6456

"Working to enhance and protect the water resources of the Snake River Watershed"

September 7, 2023

Aitkin County Administrator
Aitkin County Courthouse
307 2nd Street NW
Aitkin, MN. 56431
Attn: Jessica Seibert

Ms. Seibert and Aitkin County Commissioners,

The Snake River Watershed Management Board was notified and presented with a letter of petition for dissolution of the Snake River Watershed Management Board from Pine County.

On September 5, 2023 the Pine County Board of Commissioners voted unanimously to petition the Snake River Watershed Management Board to dissolve SRWMB under section X(B) of the Snake River Management Board Joint Powers Agreement.

This petition initiates the public hearing described under section X(B). A public hearing will be held within 90 days of written notice to each member governmental unit. This letter serves as your notification.

If you have any questions, please contact me.

Respectfully,

Teresa Wickham

Teresa Wickham, Coordinator
Snake River Watershed Management Board
903 Forest Ave E
Mora, MN 55051
teresa.wickeham@co.kanabec.mn.us
320-679-6456



PINE COUNTY

Administrator's Office

635 Northridge Drive NW
Suite 200
Pine City, MN 55063
1-800-450-7463 Ext. 1620
Fax: 320-591-1628

Commissioners

Steve Hallan – Dist. 1
Josh Mohr – Dist. 2
Terry Lovgren – Dist. 3
J.J. Waldhalm – Dist. 4
Matt Ludwig – Dist. 5

County Administrator

David J. Minke

September 6, 2023

Snake River Watershed Management Board
Honorable Roger Tellinghuisen, Chair
Honorable Terry Lovgren, Vice Chair
Honorable Peter Ripka
Honorable Bret Sample
Kanabec County
Mora, MN

VIA EMAIL ONLY

Dear Chair Tellinghuisen and members:

In early 2020, Aitkin, Kanabec, Mille Lacs, and Pine Counties and the Soil and Water Conservation Districts of those four counties adopted a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to develop and adopt a coordinated watershed management plan for the Snake River Watershed.

The plan has been adopted by all members of the MOA. A majority of the partners have adopted a Joint Powers Agreement to form the Snake River Watershed Plan Partnership (SRWPP). The purpose of the SRWPP is to implement the adopted plan. The SRWPP has scheduled its initial meeting for September 25, 2023.

With the formation of the SRWPP, there are now two joint powers exercising the same general powers in the Snake River Watershed for the same general purposes. This situation seems redundant and unnecessary. For example, the three other watersheds that Pine County partners on for water planning only have a single entity.

On September 5, 2023 the Pine County Board of Commissioners voted unanimously to petition the Snake River Watershed Management Board to dissolve SRWMB under section X(B) of the Snake River Management Board Joint Powers Agreement. This letter is Pine County's petition. It is our understanding that this petition initiates the public hearing described under section X(B).

Please let me know if you require anything further.

Sincerely,

David J. Minke
County Administrator

CC: Teresa Wickeham, SRW Coordinator

2024 Aitkin County Legislative Priorities

Administration

1. Aitkin County supports promoting legislation that preserves tax base in response to increased property tax appeals, utility tax refunds, and potential “dark store” assessing practices.

Assessor

1. 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. After recent legislative changes, Minnesota now has a total of 68 classifications which is the most of any State in the US.
2. Increased safety of field employees. Change State Law to grant assessors access to location data of more predatory offenders. Field staff are required to do physical inspections of all real estate in the county. Not knowing where dangerous criminals live puts staff in the field at risk.
3. Change the Disabled Veterans Market Value Exclusion to a state administered refund program. If this change would take place, the costs of the program would be spread over the whole State instead of shifting the tax burden on local governments.
4. Any new program mandated by the State should be funded by the State.

Attorney's Office

1. Additional sustainable (on-going) funding for County Attorney’s Offices in greater Minnesota to help increase County Attorney’s Office staff wages and salaries so that they can be competitive with the new State Public Defender’s wages and salaries.
2. Additional sustainable (on-going) funding for County Attorney’s Offices for child protection.
3. Additional sustainable (on-going) funding for County Attorney’s Offices for the state judiciary’s shift of a substantial amount of court administration duties to the County Attorney’s Offices.
4. Increased penalties for damage to public property and critical infrastructure.

Community Corrections

Economic Development

1. Emphasize Broadband development in rural areas, under-served and un-served areas. Continue to make Broadband improvement a state priority by increasing funding to Border to Border and ReConnect grant programs and lowering or eliminating Internet Service Provider's match requirements. Execute the BEAD program funding to the rural counties with the most need.
2. Increase availability of funds for new childcare providers by offering incentives that assist in at-home remodel and licensing fees and increase support for existing providers by offering programs that fund equipment upgrades and staffing support. Assign the current funding appropriately in order to reach the providers, not just the families.
3. Prioritize funding allocated for housing developments that solve the market rate and workforce housing shortages in rural counties.
4. Support the promotion of outdoor recreation in the rural counties.
5. Continue current programs that develop workforce training, vocational training and specialized trade training for all age demographic by offering or increasing funding to high school vocational training laboratories.
6. Increase programming to develop entrepreneurial business expansion in rural counties.

Environmental Services

1. Aitkin County and MACPZA support increased Natural Resources Block Grant (NRBG) funding and continued flexibility for the use of the funding. Aitkin County and MACPZA also support 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.
2. Aitkin County and MACPZA support modifications to the SSTS licensing programs to ensure tests are consistent with course materials and Minnesota Rules 7080-7083.
3. Aitkin County and MACPZA supports state (DNR) assistance with implementation of regional executive boards to address aquatic invasive species challenges and meet minimum standards developed by MAIRSC, MNDNR, MACPZA, and MLR.
4. Aitkin County and SWAA support allocating 100 percent of the revenue generated by the Solid Waste Management Tax (SWMT) to state and county waste management activities, including increased funding for SCORE (Governor's Select Committee on Recycling and the Environment) grants to counties.
5. Aitkin County and SWAA support efforts to make improvements that would maximize the e-waste recycling program. Additionally, SWAA supports the use of manufacturer payments to fully reimburse county collection and recycling costs. Furthermore, SWAA supports reducing end-of-life costs to consumers through increased manufacturer responsibility.
6. Aitkin County and SWAA support requiring the MPCA to issue, and/or reissue all demolition land disposal facility permits, in a timely manner, in accordance with the MPCA's 2005 Guidance Document (as listed on the MPCA website) until such guidance are otherwise modified by new Rule or Statute.

7. Aitkin County and SWAA supports bonding requests for proposed solid waste management projects as a partial match to the funds that counties invest in infrastructure for safe, environmentally sound management of solid wastes mandated by the state.
8. Aitkin County and SWAA support the use of manufacturer payments to fully reimburse county collection and recycling costs.
9. Aitkin County and SWAA support State encouragement and funding to prevent food waste and divert food scraps and other organics from the MSW stream, and resolve permitting and other issues to facilitate expansion of composting and other organic management facilities and methods.
10. Aitkin County and SWAA support standards/labeling requirements for compostable products to reduce processing impacts and costs of contamination at composting facilities.

Health & Human Services

1. Support legislation for System Modernization which would include the main computer systems for HHS staff. (Maxis, METS, Prism, SSIS) Legislation should include funds to cover county costs associated with DHS investments. Support legislation of an innovation fund for counties to co-develop collaborative solutions.
2. Support legislation for high acuity mental health hospital bed capacity for adults and children that will support planning for solutions.
3. Support legislation to allow MnCHOICES reassessments to be conducted as administrative reviews to reduce the amount of assessments and staff needed for this service. This will focus resources on new assessment needs and will improve access for clients.
4. Support legislation to change the child protection response of educational neglect to a child welfare response to increase access to supports for families

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.

Human Resources

1. Change the frequency of reporting for pay equity from every three years to every five years.
2. Simplify the process and shorten the timeline (no longer than 6 months) for Minnesota counties who are interested in exiting the Minnesota Merit System. Allow counties to exit at any time throughout the calendar year.

3. 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.
4. Oppose any new state-mandated time off benefits such as the Paid Family and Medical Leave benefit program, funded by employees and employers. Public employers currently provide generous leave accrual banks. Allow public employers and unions to negotiate paid time off benefits without a state mandate.

Land Department

1. Support Outdoor School for All Minnesota legislation. This is a grant that would fund a three-day, two-night immersive nature experience for every fourth through eighth grade student. This would include all programming fees, transportation and ancillary costs such as teacher stipends, thus making these trips entirely free to students and schools.
2. Support a legislative solution to Minnesota's tax forfeiture law that does not negatively affect the county's management responsibilities and apportionment. Many agencies are working on this as a result of the Tyler vs. Hennepin County legal case.

Sheriff's Office

1. Pursue legislation that would prohibit firearms in county buildings where court services occur.
2. Pursue legislation that would continue medical assistance payments for incarcerated individuals allowing for more mental health and chemical addiction treatment options, which may result in stabilization after release and reduced recidivism. (Federal program)

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 Treasurer's office.
2. Have Mobile Homes returned to tabs issued by the DMV rather than being taxed thru the property tax system or raising the value threshold for them to be taxed thru the property tax system.



Board of County Commissioners Agenda Request



Requested Meeting Date: September 12, 2023

Title of Item: Approve Use of Courthouse Grounds

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> REGULAR AGENDA	Action Requested:	<input type="checkbox"/> Direction Requested	
<input type="checkbox"/> CONSENT AGENDA		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approve/Deny Motion	<input 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*

Submitted by: Jessica Seibert	Department: Administration
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Presenter (Name and Title): Jessica Seibert, County Administrator	Estimated Time Needed: 5 Min.
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Summary of Issue:

Constitution week 2023 starts with Constitution Day, September 17 and the Daughters of the American Revolution will be ringing bells across the nation.

The Brainerd Chapter Robert Orr of Daughters of the American Revolution Committee are seeking permission to ring bells on the Aitkin County Courthouse grounds at 3:00pm Sunday, September 17, 2023. Kari Abbott (Co-Chair of the Constitution Committee), Aitkin County resident is making this request.

See attached.

Alternatives, Options, Effects on Others/Comments:

Recommended Action/Motion:

Recommend the approval of the Daughters of the American Revolution to ring bells at 3:00pm on Constitution Day, September 17, 2023 on Aitkin County Courthouse grounds.

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:*

From: Gary Abbott <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, September 8, 2023 8:21 AM
To: Jessica Seibert <jessica.seibert@co.aitkin.mn.us>
Subject: Constitution Day Bell Ringing

[**NOTICE:** This message originated outside of the Aitkin County Mail System -- **DO NOT CLICK** on links or open **attachments** unless you are sure the content is safe.]

Hi, the Daughters of the American Revolution across the nation ring their bells at 3:00 on constitution Day, September 17th. I am a member of the Brainerd Chapter Robert Orr. Another Aitkin County resident and I are the co chairs fo the Constitution Committee for the chapter this year. May we have permission to ring the bells with any other members fo our group that can come over to the courthouse on the 17th? We would be doing it at 3:00. Here is a bit from the National leadership:

Bells will sound for a full minute across America at 4 p.m. EST on September 17th to commemorate the 236th anniversary of the signing of the U.S. Constitution on Sept. 17, 1787¹²³. The celebration will occur at the same time across America, with each time zone adjusting its time so that it will happen simultaneously¹. The bells are rung to signify the signing of the Constitution, which occurred at 4 pm on September 17, 1787, in Philadelphia, Penn., at the Pennsylvania State House (now Independence Hall)²³.

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

Thank you,

Kari Abbott



Board of County Commissioners Agenda Request



Requested Meeting Date:

Title of Item:

<p>REGULAR AGENDA</p> <p>CONSENT AGENDA</p> <p>INFORMATION ONLY</p>	<p>Action Requested:</p> <p>Approve/Deny Motion</p> <p>Adopt Resolution (attach draft)</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>*provide copy of hearing notice that was published</i></p>	<p>Direction Requested</p> <p>Discussion Item</p> <p>Hold Public Hearing*</p>
<p>Submitted by:</p>		<p>Department:</p>
<p>Presenter (Name and Title):</p>		<p>Estimated Time Needed:</p>
<p>Summary of Issue:</p>		
<p>Alternatives, Options, Effects on Others/Comments:</p>		
<p>Recommended Action/Motion:</p>		
<p>Financial Impact:</p> <p><i>Is there a cost associated with this request?</i> Yes No</p> <p><i>What is the total cost, with tax and shipping? \$</i></p> <p><i>Is this budgeted?</i> Yes No <i>Please Explain:</i></p>		

CERTIFIED COPY OF RESOLUTION OF COUNTY BOARD OF AITKIN COUNTY, MINNESOTA

ADOPTED September 12, 2023

By Commissioner: xxx

20230912-xxx

Approve the TED Application – TH 65-210 Intersection Project

BE IT RESOLVED that Aitkin County act as the legal sponsor for the TH 65-210 Round-About project and requests funding from the Transportation Economic Development (TED) Program of the Minnesota Department of Transportation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Aitkin County has the legal authority to apply for financial assistance, and the institutional, managerial, and financial capability to ensure matching funds and adequate construction of the proposed project.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Aitkin County has not violated any Federal, State or local laws pertaining to fraud, bribery, graft, kickbacks, collusion, conflict of interest or other unlawful or corrupt practice.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that upon approval of its application by the state, Aitkin County may enter into an agreement with the State of Minnesota for the above-referenced project, and that it will comply with all applicable laws and regulations as stated in all contract agreements.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Aitkin County has committed \$225,000 towards the local match requirement.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Aitkin County confirms that if the project cost increases above the amount listed in the Application, Aitkin County will provide or secure all additional funds necessary to complete the project. Aitkin County certifies that it will comply with all applicable laws, regulations, and rules of the Application.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the sources and uses, private investors, equity, and other financing commitment represented in the attached document are accurate.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Aitkin County Engineer and Aitkin County Administrator, or their successors in office, are hereby authorized to execute such agreements, and amendments thereto, as are necessary to implement the project(s) on behalf of the applicant.

Commissioner xxx seconded the adoption of the resolution and it was declared adopted upon the following vote

xxx MEMBERS PRESENT

All Members Voting xxx

**STATE OF MINNESOTA}
COUNTY OF AITKIN}**

I, Jessica Seibert, County Administrator, Aitkin County, Minnesota do hereby certify that I have compared the foregoing with the original resolution filed in the Administration Office of Aitkin County in Aitkin, Minnesota as stated in the minutes of the proceedings of said Board on the 12th day of September 2023, and that the same is a true and correct copy of the whole thereof.

Witness my hand and seal this 12th day of September 2023

Jessica Seibert
County Administrator

AITKIN COUNTY 2024 Proposed Budget

September 12, 2023



Outline

- Budget Category Review
- 2024 Budget Summary
- Historical Data
- Budgeted Use of Fund Balance
- Questions/Staff Direction

Budget Category Review

Salaries & Benefits

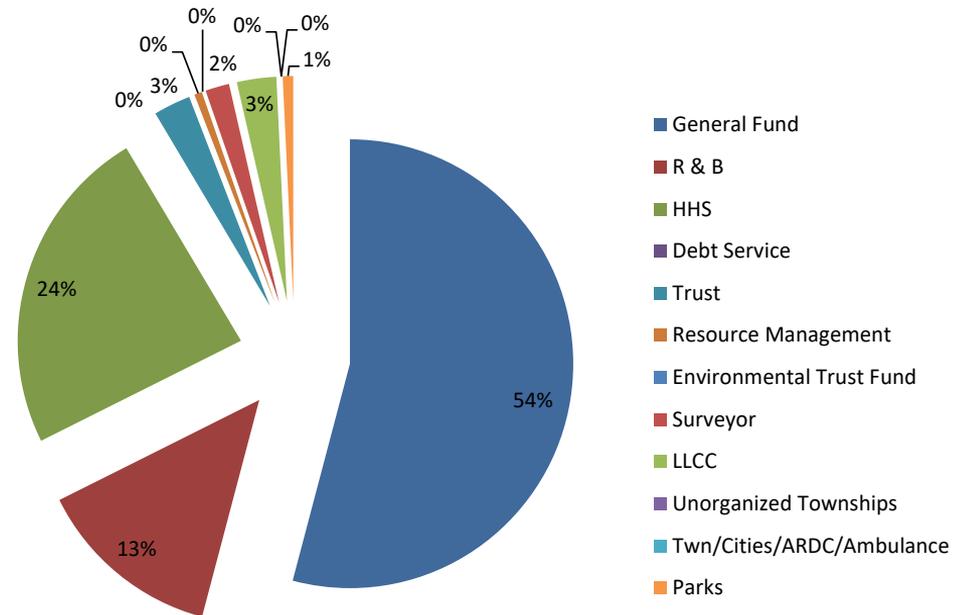
Total - \$23,457,923

Includes:

- Wages
- Health Insurance
- Life Insurance
- Disability Insurance
- FICA/PERA/HSA
- Medicare

Represents 52% of budgeted Expenses
Increase = \$639,204

Salaries & Benefits



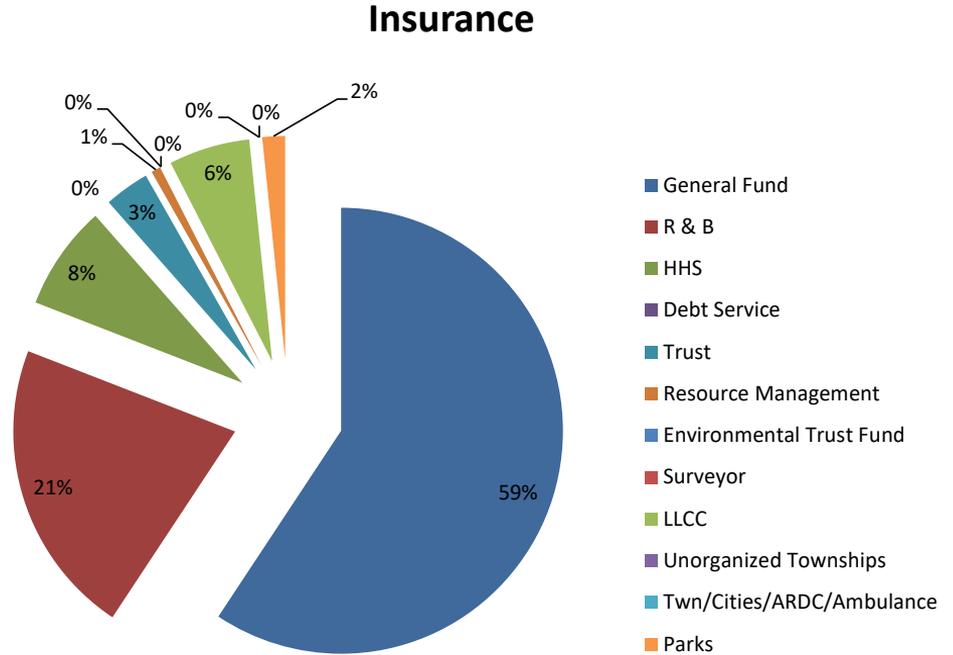
Insurance

Total - \$327,847

Includes:

- Property Insurance
- Worker's Compensation
- Vehicle/Equipment Insurance

Represents 0.7% of budgeted Expenses
Increase = \$37,663



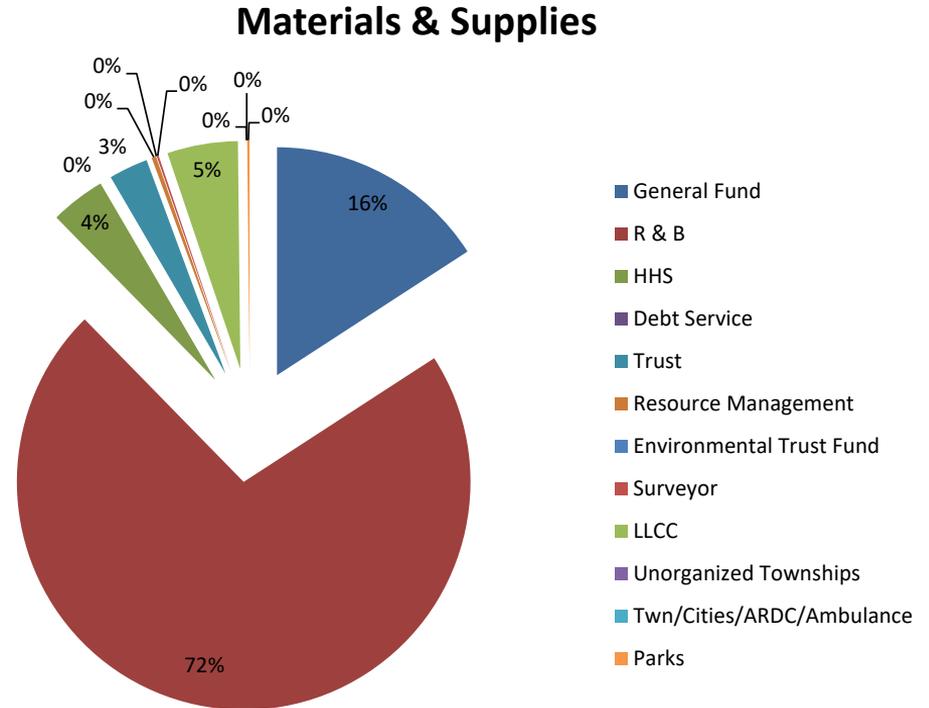
Materials & Supplies

Total - \$3,188,434

Includes:

- Office Supplies
- Computer Supplies
- Maintenance Supplies
- Field Supplies
- Jail Supplies
- Fuel/Oil for Road Maintenance

Represents 7% of budgeted Expenses
Increase = \$225,157



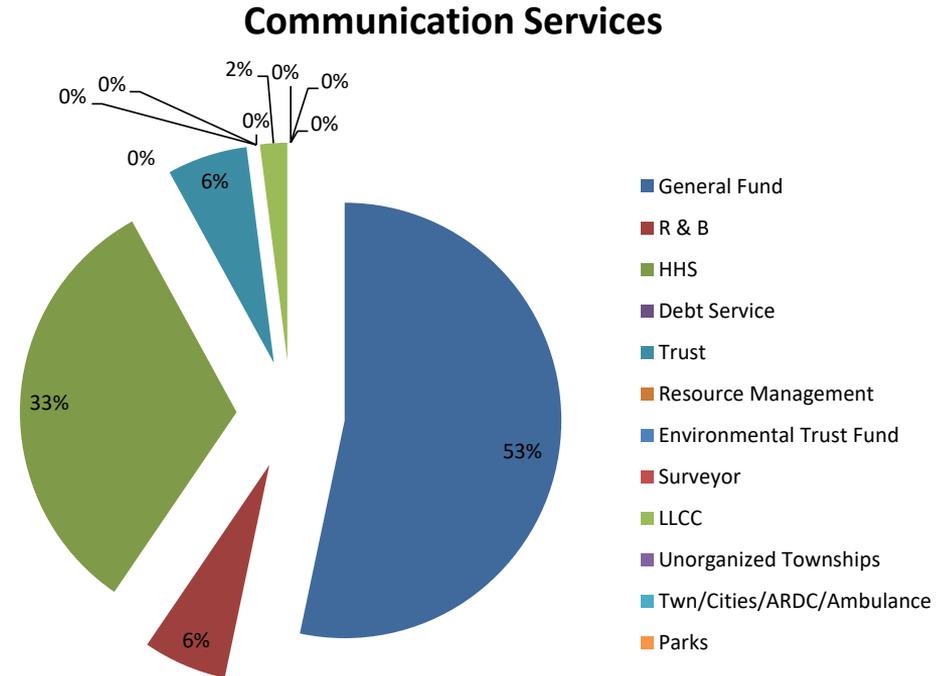
Communication Services

Total - \$200,517

Includes:

- Postage/Mailing Costs
- Telephone Costs

Represents 0.4% of budgeted Expenses
Increase = \$3,211



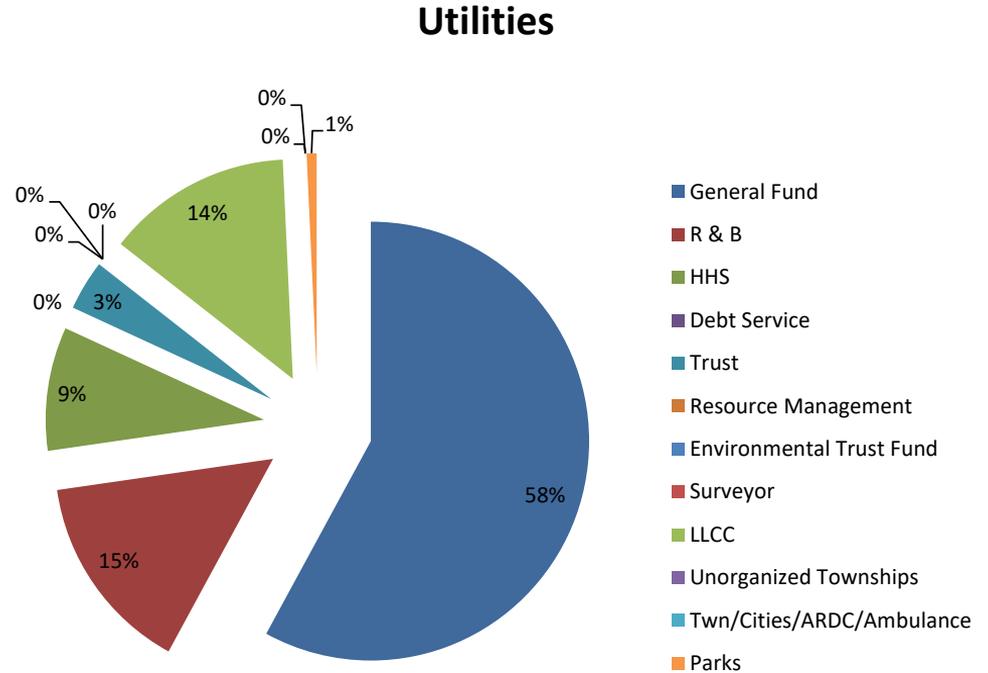
Utilities

Total - \$406,036

Includes:

- Electric
- Gas
- Trash Removal

Represents 0.9% of budgeted Expenses
Increase = \$64,431



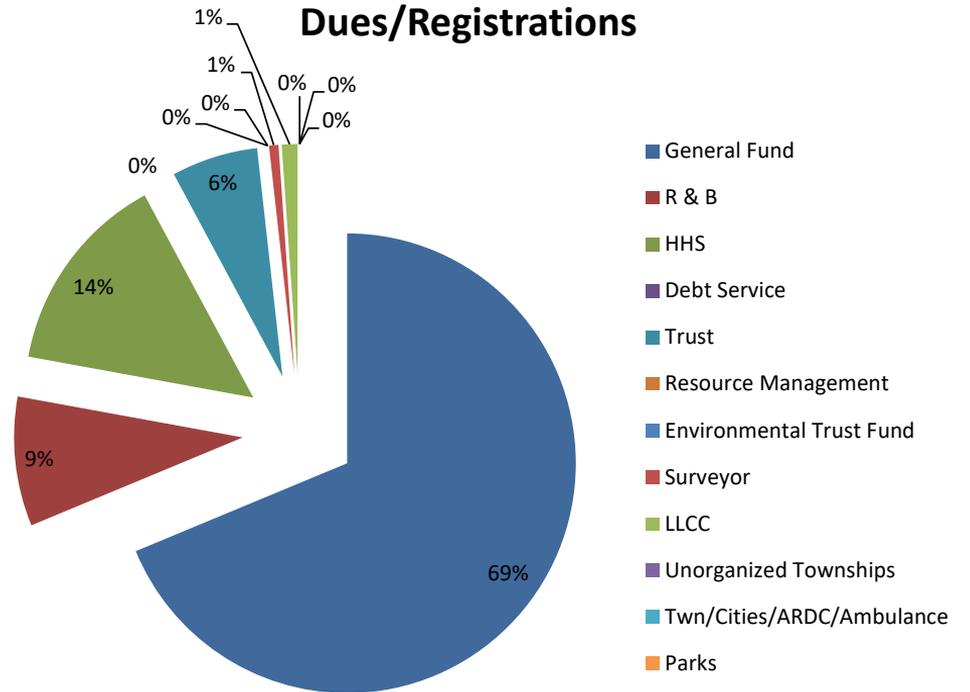
Dues/Registration

Total - \$90,098

Includes:

- Membership Dues
- Association Fees
- Meeting Registration
- License Fees

Represents 0.2% of budgeted Expenses
Decrease = \$916



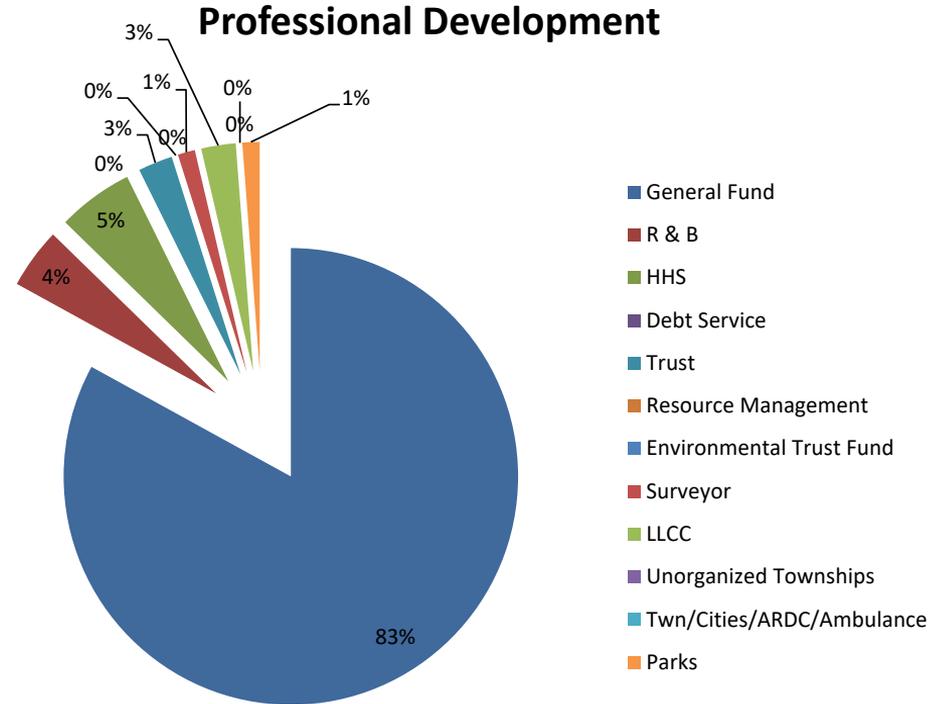
Professional Development

Total - \$40,800

Includes:

- Conference Registration
- Other Training Expenses

Represents 0.09% of budgeted Expenses
Decrease = \$5,475



Contracts & Service Agreements

Total - \$11,414,632

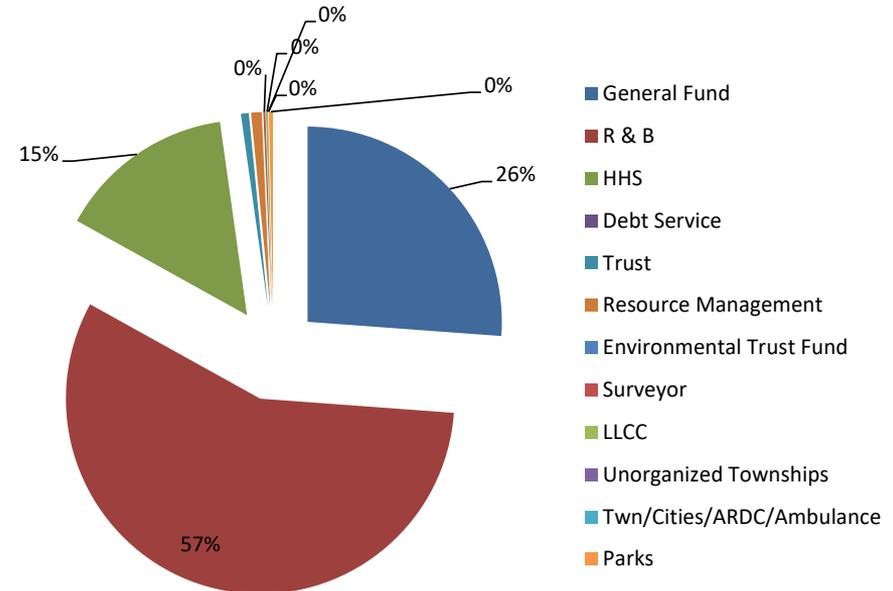
Includes:

- Publishing/Advertising
- Service Contracts
- HHS Programs
- Software Licenses
- Professional Services
- Recycling Contracts
- R&B Contracts

Represents 25% of budgeted Expenses

Decrease = \$484,475

Contract & Service Agreements



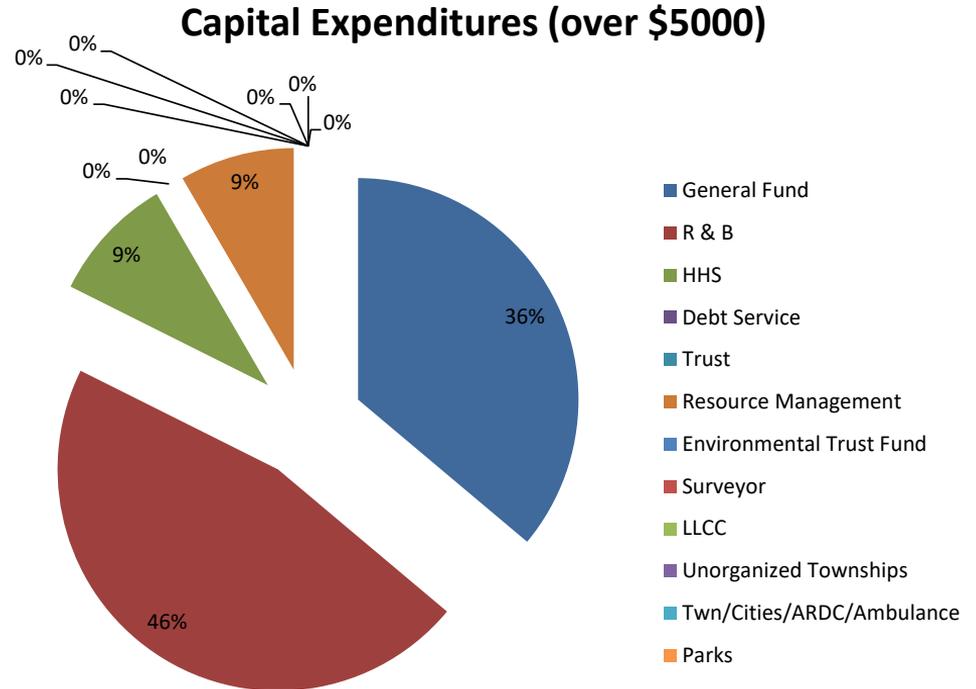
Capital Expenditures (Over \$5,000)

Total - \$1,320,905

Includes:

- Vehicles
- Computers
- Technology Equipment
- Radio Equipment
- R&B Equipment

Represents 3% of budgeted Expenses
Increase = \$116,452



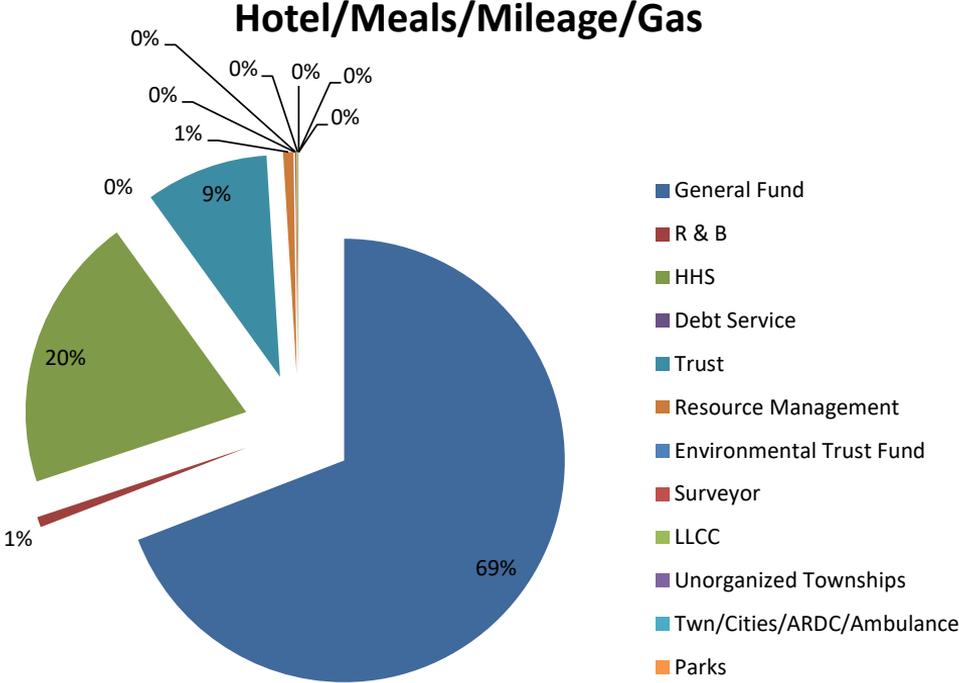
Hotel/Meals/Mileage/Gas

Total - \$397,868

Includes:

- Vehicle Fuel
- Mileage Reimbursements
- Meals

Represents 0.9% of budgeted Expenses
Decrease = \$20,538



Other Expenditures

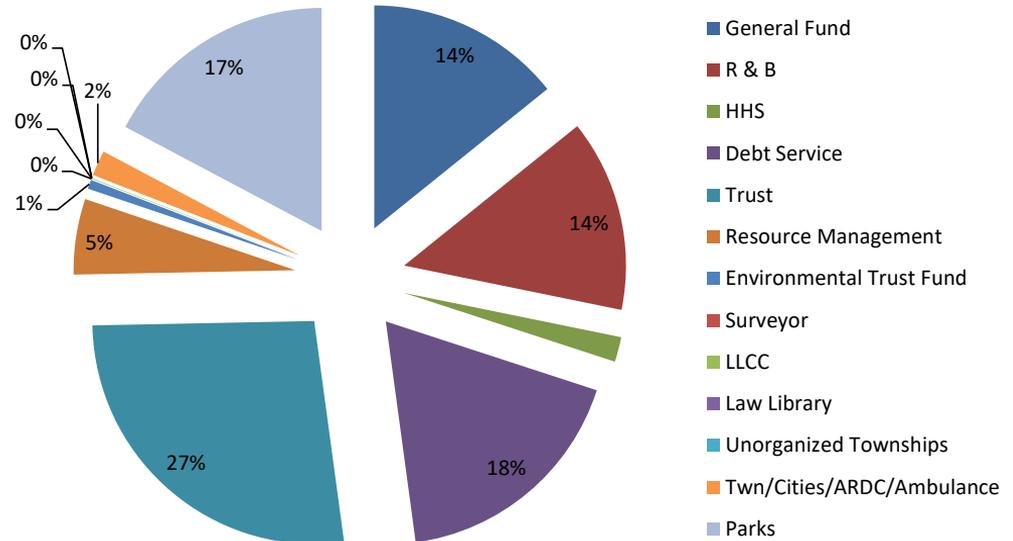
Total - \$3,923,999

Includes:

- Appropriations
- Apportionments
- Township Road Allotment

Represents 8% of budgeted Expenses
Decrease = \$253,039

Other Expenditures



2024 Preliminary Budget Summary

Revenue/Expense Comparison Summary

2023 – APPROVED BUDGET

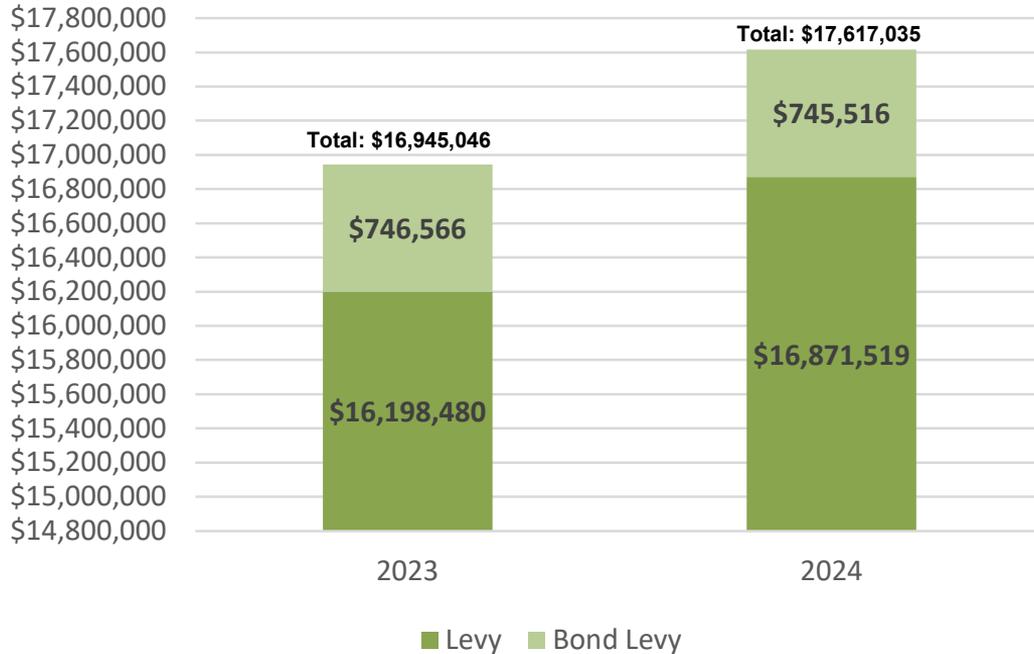
Expense Total	\$44,447,384
• Salaries/Benefits	\$22,818,719
• Insurance	\$290,184
• Materials/Supplies	\$2,963,277
• Communication Services	\$197,306
• Utilities	\$341,605
• Dues/Registrations	\$91,014
• Professional Development	\$46,275
• Contracts/Service Agreements	\$11,899,107
• Capital Expenditures	\$1,204,453
• Hotels/Meals/Mileage/Gas	\$418,406
• Other	\$4,177,038
Revenue Total	\$44,447,384
• Fees	\$3,263,177
• Grants	\$18,543,515
• Other Revenue	\$4,676,733
• County Levy	\$16,945,046
• <i>Planned Use of Fund Balance</i>	<i>\$1,018,913</i>

2024 – PROPOSED BUDGET

Expense Total	\$44,855,609
• Salaries/Benefits	\$23,457,923
• Insurance	\$327,847
• Materials/Supplies	\$3,188,434
• Communication Services	\$200,517
• Utilities	\$406,036
• Dues/Registrations	\$90,098
• Professional Development	\$40,800
• Contracts/Service Agreements	\$11,414,632
• Capital Expenditures	\$1,320,905
• Hotels/Meals/Mileage/Gas	\$397,868
• Other	\$4,010,868
Revenue Total	\$44,855,609
• Fees	\$3,403,724
• Grants	\$19,539,517
• Other Revenue	\$3,876,725
• County Levy	\$17,617,035
• <i>Planned Use of Fund Balance</i>	<i>\$418,608</i>

2024 Budget Summary

Levy Comparison

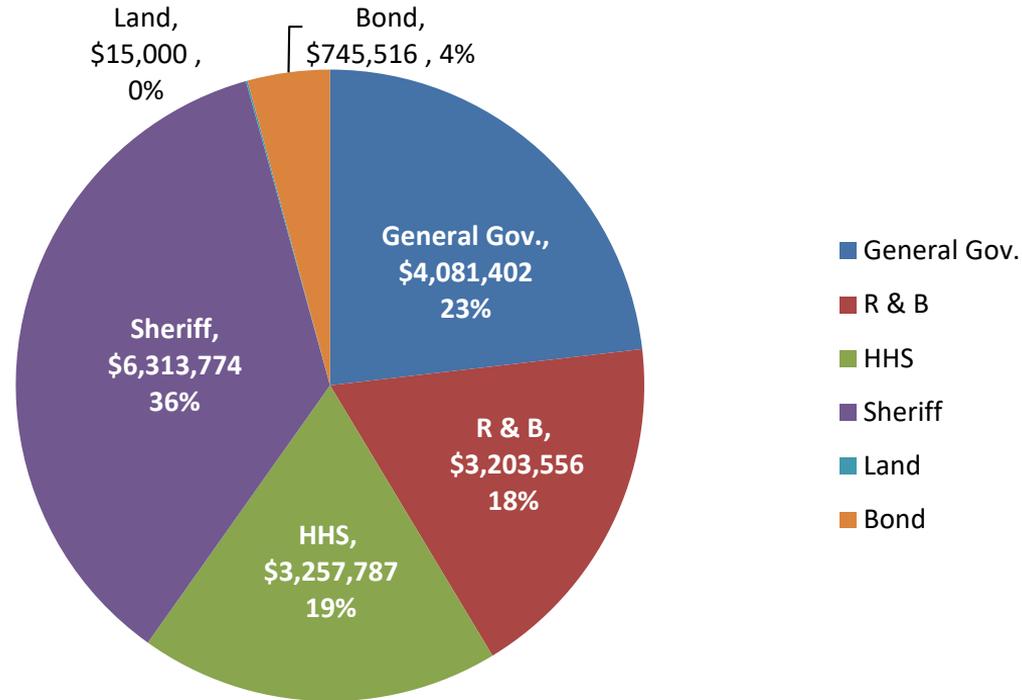


Total Expenditures - \$44,855,609
Other Revenues - \$26,879,266
Levy - \$17,617,035

Includes bond payments of -
\$700,515 – 3.9% of total levy

Proposed Levy Increase –
\$671,989 or 3.97%

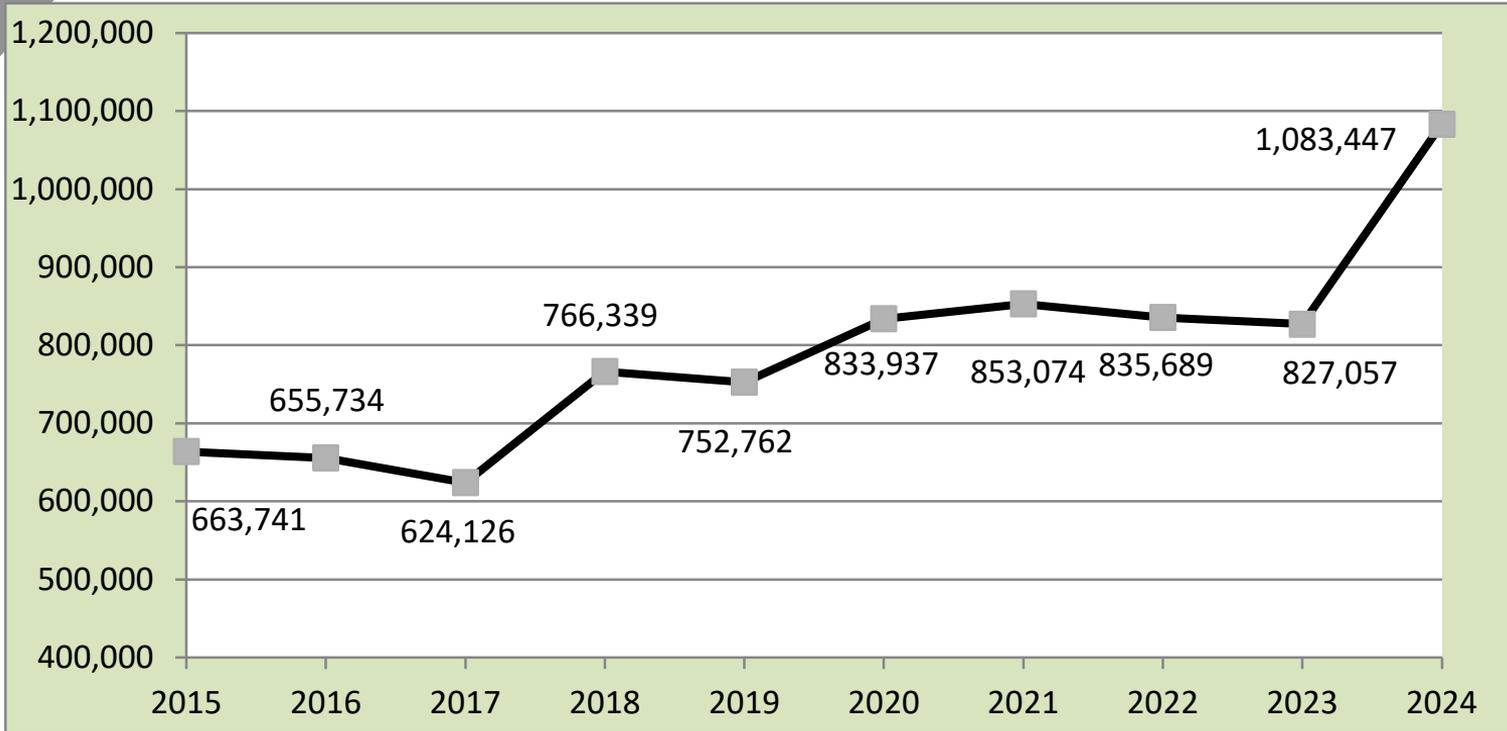
2024 Proposed Levy by Major Department



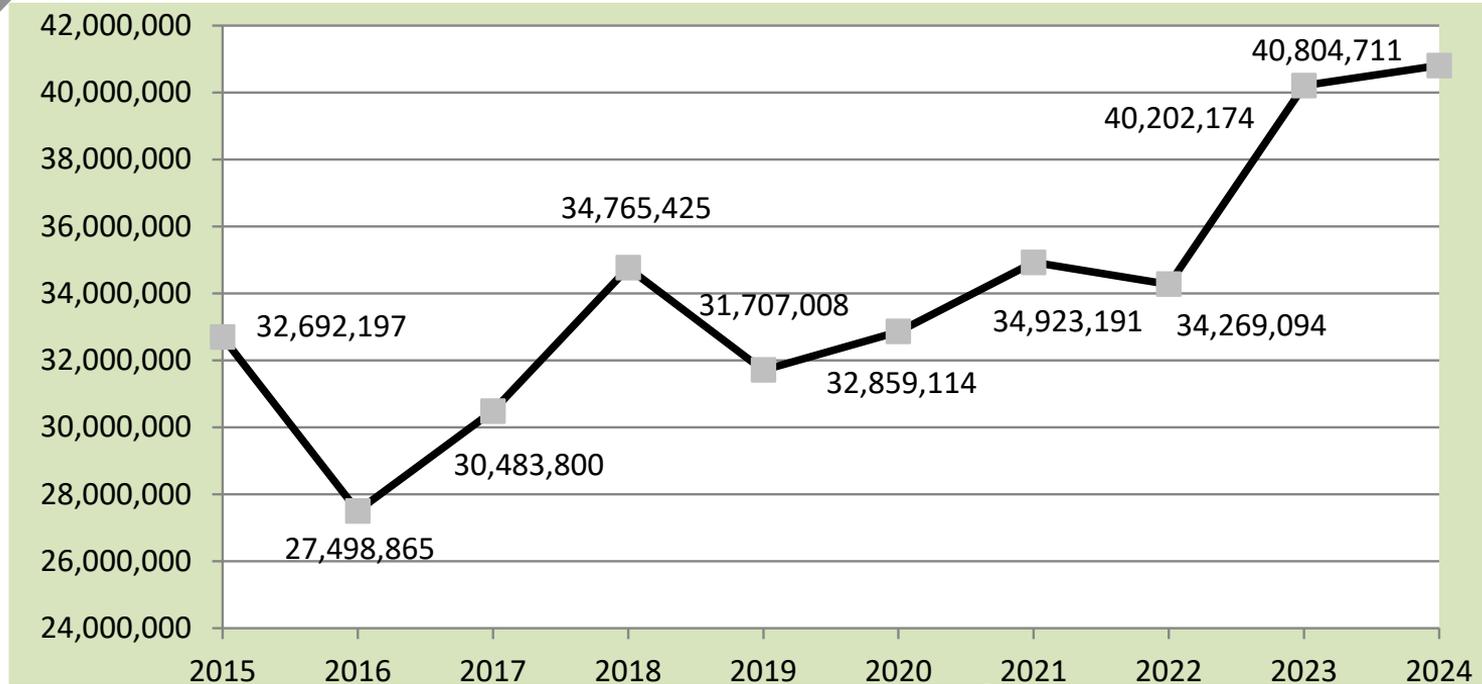
Historical Perspective

CPA ❖ BUDGET ❖ LEVY

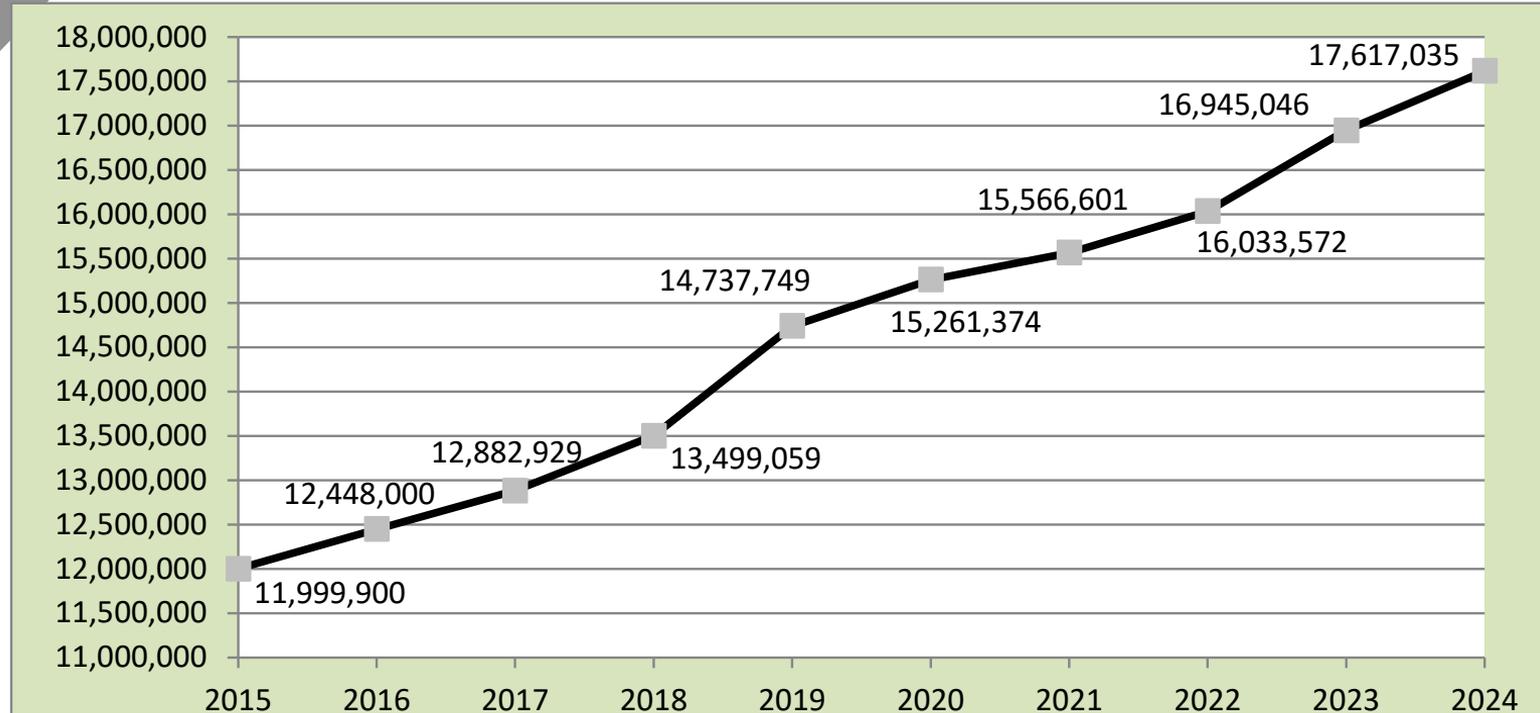
County Program Aid (CPA)



Historical Budget Amounts (Levy Budgets)



Historical Levy Amounts



Fund Balance Use

Planned Use of Restricted Fund Balances

IT	\$20,000	Recorder's Tech./Compliance Funds
Solid Waste	\$45,000	Solid Waste Fund
Parks	\$67,128	Parks Fund
LLCC	(\$5,072)	LLCC Balance
Resource Management	\$125,053	Resource Management Fund
Debt Service	(\$45,001)	Debt Service Account
Recorder's Office	<u>\$211,500</u>	Recorder's Tech./Compliance Funds
TOTAL:	\$418,608	

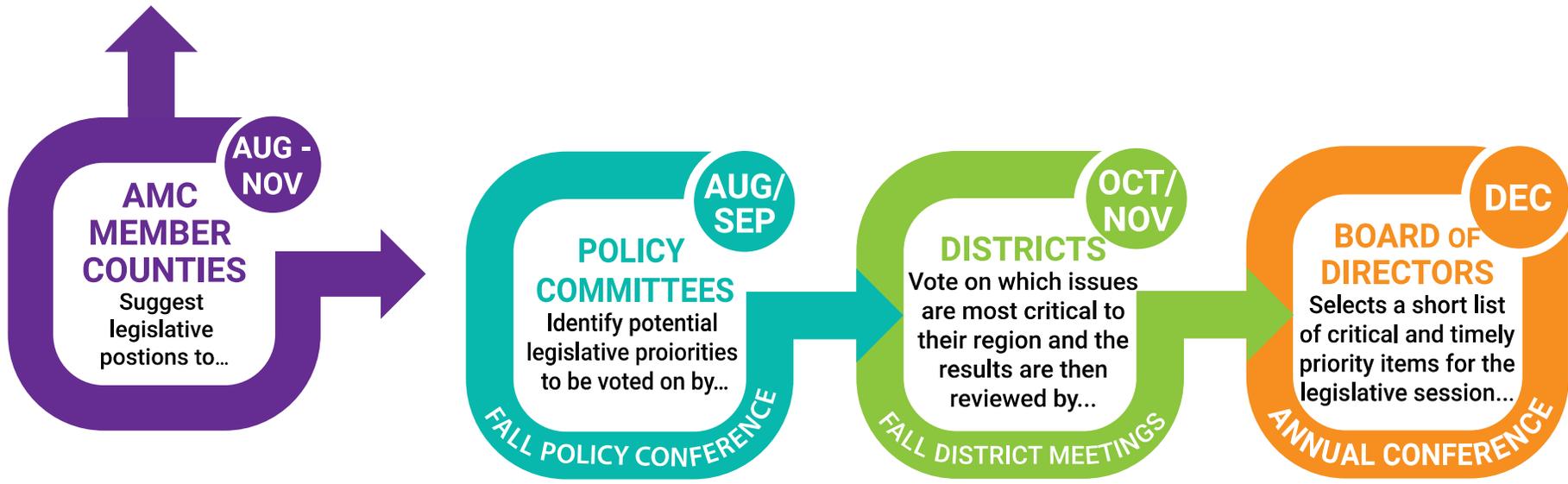
Questions or Staff Direction





ANNUAL LEGISLATIVE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Legislative PLATFORM Development



Legislative PRIORITY Development