



Board of County Commissioners Agenda Request

9A
Agenda Item #

Requested Meeting Date: April 8, 2025

Title of Item: County Administrator Recruitment Update and Process Moving Forward

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> REGULAR AGENDA <input type="checkbox"/> CONSENT AGENDA	Action Requested: <input type="checkbox"/> Approve/Deny Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Adopt Resolution (attach draft) <input type="checkbox"/> Hold Public Hearing <i>*provide copy of hearing notice that was published</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Direction Requested <input type="checkbox"/> Discussion Item <input type="checkbox"/> Information Only
Submitted by: Bobbie Danielson		Department: Human Resources
Presenter (Name and Title): Bobbie Danielson, HR Director		Estimated Time Needed: 15 Minutes
Summary of Issue: <p>A conditional job offer was made on March 20, 2025, following interviews. After a great deal of consideration, on March 26, 2025, the candidate withdrew from consideration, citing that the timing was not right to move forward with building their new home on their property in Aitkin County and selling their other home.</p> <p>Multiple options were explored in an effort to recruit the top candidate, including discussions about the County's remote work policy, a delayed start date, interim or part-time work during the home-building process, the possibility of local housing (such as a vacant unit at LLCC), a signing bonus, and any other creative solutions that could be brought before the County Board for consideration, short of a withdrawal. Despite these efforts, the candidate ultimately chose to withdraw, citing the timing of their home construction as the determining factor.</p> <p>He expressed deep appreciation for the offer made, noting it was generous and that his decision had nothing to do with the terms of employment. He thanked the Board members and staff for their kindness throughout the process and conveyed sincere regret that this was not the outcome he had anticipated when applying. He also apologized for the delay his withdrawal may cause in the County's hiring process.</p> <p>The second candidate called on March 24, 2025, indicating she has been offered the City Administrator position in Crosby, MN and would be accepting their offer. The third candidate received a courtesy letter.</p>		
Alternatives, Options, Effects on Others/Comments: <p>The Board has a few options to consider. 1. Revisit the existing applicant pool 2. Re-advertise the position 3. Contract with DDA to conduct a search (\$24,000 cost), 4. Explore other ideas or approaches the Board members have.</p>		
Recommended Action/Motion: <p>1. Determine whether the full Board or a subcommittee of the Board desires to be involved in this recruitment process here forward.</p> <p>2. Discussion. Determine how the Board would like to move forward. See options listed above.</p>		
Financial Impact: <p>Is there a cost associated with this request? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>What is the total cost, with tax and shipping? \$</p> <p>Is this budgeted? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <i>Please Explain:</i></p>		



Job Announcement

Aitkin County Hiring: County Administrator

Full-time position serving as the chief administrative officer per MN Statute [375A.06](#). Responsible for the overall operation of county government under administrative direction of the County Board of Commissioners.

2025 Salary Range: \$118,751–\$164,115 + excellent benefits.

Deadline: Open until filled. First review of applications 3/6/2025. Interviews will be held on 3/20/2025 (in-person only). Top finalist will undergo a leadership assessment at Martin McAllister on 3/31/2025.

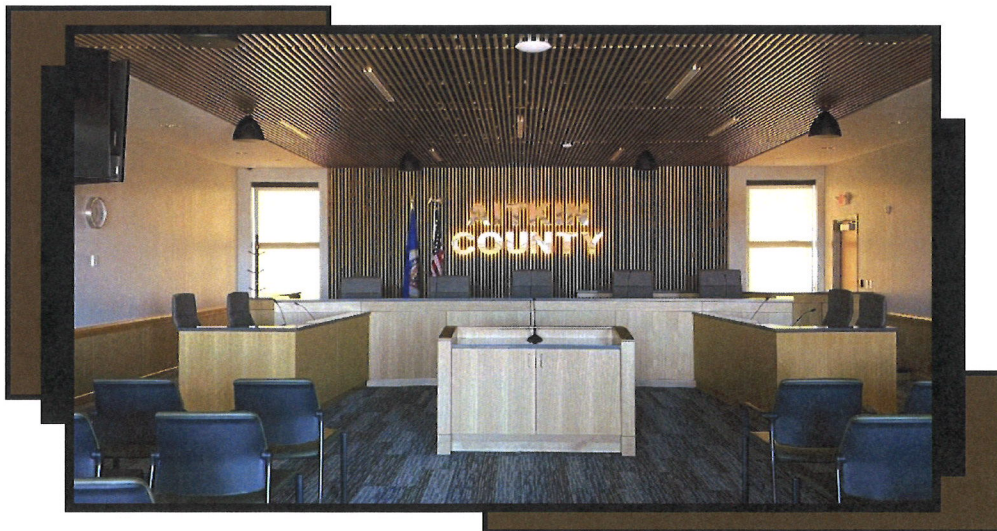
Starting benefit package: Single health [insurance](#) coverage paid by employer. \$2,260 employer contribution to HSA (or \$3,260 single+1 or family). PERA retirement, employer contribution 7.5% of gross salary. Employer paid life insurance. Employer reimbursed LTD insurance. PTO starting at 192 hours annually and up to 48 hours personal leave annually. 11+ paid holidays per year. Supplemental benefits also available.

Job description, details & application:

<https://aitkincounty.applicantstack.com/x/detail/a2on7moabn67>

All questions are welcome: 218-927-7306 or HR@aitkincountymn.gov

(Website and email updates are currently in progress, transitioning from www.co.aitkin.mn.us to www.aitkincountymn.gov. During this transition, both addresses will remain functional.)



Welcome to Aitkin County, MN

County seat: Aitkin, MN

Founded: May 23, 1857

Core Values: Collaboration, Innovation, Integrity, People-Focused, Professionalism

Vision: We strive to be a county of safe, vibrant communities that place value on good stewardship of local resources.

Mission: Aitkin County's mission is to provide outstanding service in a fiscally responsible manner through innovation and collaboration with respect for all.

Estimated 2024 Population: 16,062

Board Members: <https://www.co.aitkin.mn.us/commissioners/>

County Departments & Services: <https://www.aitkincountymn.gov/departments/>

Aitkin County, It's Naturally Better Here: <https://naturallybetterhere.com/>

Aitkin County's Long Lake Conservation Center: <https://www.longlakeecc.org/>

Cities in Aitkin County: [Aitkin](#), McGregor, Palisade, [Hill City](#), Tamarack, McGrath

2025 Budgets:

Fund/Account	Revenues	Reserves	Expenditures
General Fund	\$18,028,476	\$1,000,578	\$19,029,054
Solid Waste	\$434,847	\$45,000	\$479,847
Road and Bridge	\$12,265,760	\$793,240	\$13,059,000
HHS	\$8,319,281	\$0	\$8,319,281
Debt Service	\$620,525	\$78,490	\$699,015
Parks	\$779,925	\$(10,998)	\$768,927
Resource Mgmt	\$460,100	\$152,237	\$612,337

Local Healthcare:

Riverwood Healthcare Center <https://riverwoodhealthcare.org/about-us/>

Cuyuna Regional Medical Center <https://www.cuyunamed.org/locations/crosby/>

Essential Health <https://www.essentiahealth.org/find-facility/essentia-health-st-josephs-deerwood-clinic>

Local Schools:

Aitkin Public Schools ISD #1 <https://home.isd1.org/>

Hill City ISD #2 <https://isd002.org/en-us/mission-vision-5c08160e#0>

McGregor ISD #4 <https://www.mcgregor.k12.mn.us/>

Skills and Qualities

To help guide our search for the next County Administrator, we asked our Commissioners and Department Heads to share the top skills and qualities they believe are most important for this role. Their responses included:

Personal Qualities

- High ethical standards and integrity
- Strong initiative and ability to work independently
- Adaptability and ability to work under pressure
- Visionary leadership and innovative thinking
- Ability to maintain confidentiality and handle sensitive information

Leadership & Management

- Strategic planning and goal setting
- Supervisory experience, including hiring, discipline, and performance evaluations
- Delegation and team-building skills
- Ability to work with elected officials and department heads effectively
- Change management and problem-solving

Government & Public Administration Knowledge

- Understanding of local, state, and federal laws, including open meeting laws and data practices
- Experience in government finance, budgeting, and policy development
- Familiarity with all county government operations and structure
- Knowledge of labor relations, including union contract negotiations
- Risk management and compliance awareness

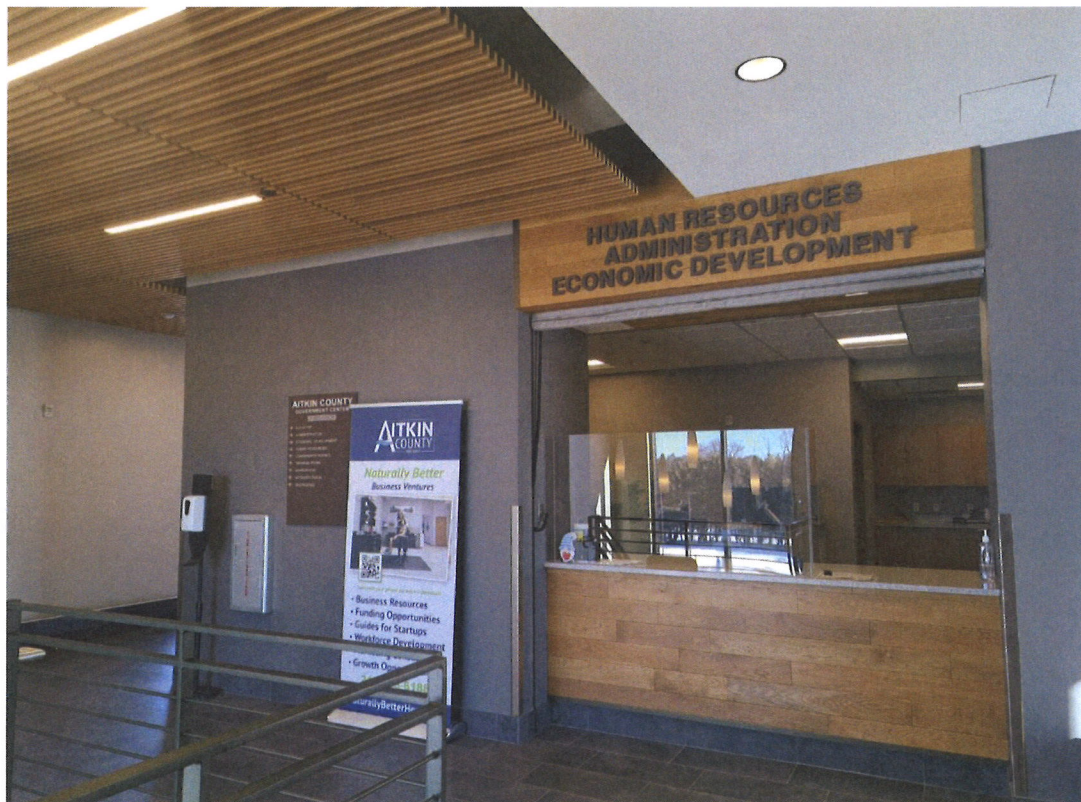
Communication & Interpersonal Skills

- Strong written and verbal communication skills, including public speaking
- Ability to communicate with Commissioners, staff, media, and the public effectively
- Active listening and conflict resolution abilities
- Public relations and relationship-building with stakeholders, including other government entities

Our Facilities



The historic courthouse - Aitkin, Minnesota



The new Government Center, featuring the 3rd-floor Administration office.

Explore the Outdoors & Local Attractions

Abundant Lakes and Rivers

A quick search on the MN DNR LakeFinder website will give you information on over 100 lakes right here in Aitkin County, MN. <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/lakefind/index.html>

Outdoor Recreation Haven

Aitkin County offers year-round outdoor recreation, including fishing, hunting, ATV/SXS and snowmobile trails, plus hiking and camping.

Northwoods ATV Trails <https://www.aitkincountymn.gov/departments/atv/>

Savanna Portage State Park

https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/state_parks/park.html?id=spk00259#homepage

Rice Lake National Wildlife Refuge <https://www.fws.gov/refuge/rice-lake>

Mississippi River and Ripple River Paddle and Kayak Routes

<https://www.aitkincountymn.gov/departments/land/pdf/2020Mississippi%20River%20Paddle%20Route.pdf>

<https://www.aitkincountymn.gov/departments/land/pdf/2020Ripple%20River%20Kayak%20Routes.pdf>

The Jaques Art Center <https://www.jaquesart.com/>

Ripple River Gallery <https://ripplesrivergallery.com/>

Historic Rialto Theatre <https://www.facebook.com/AitkinRialto/>

Chambers of Commerce

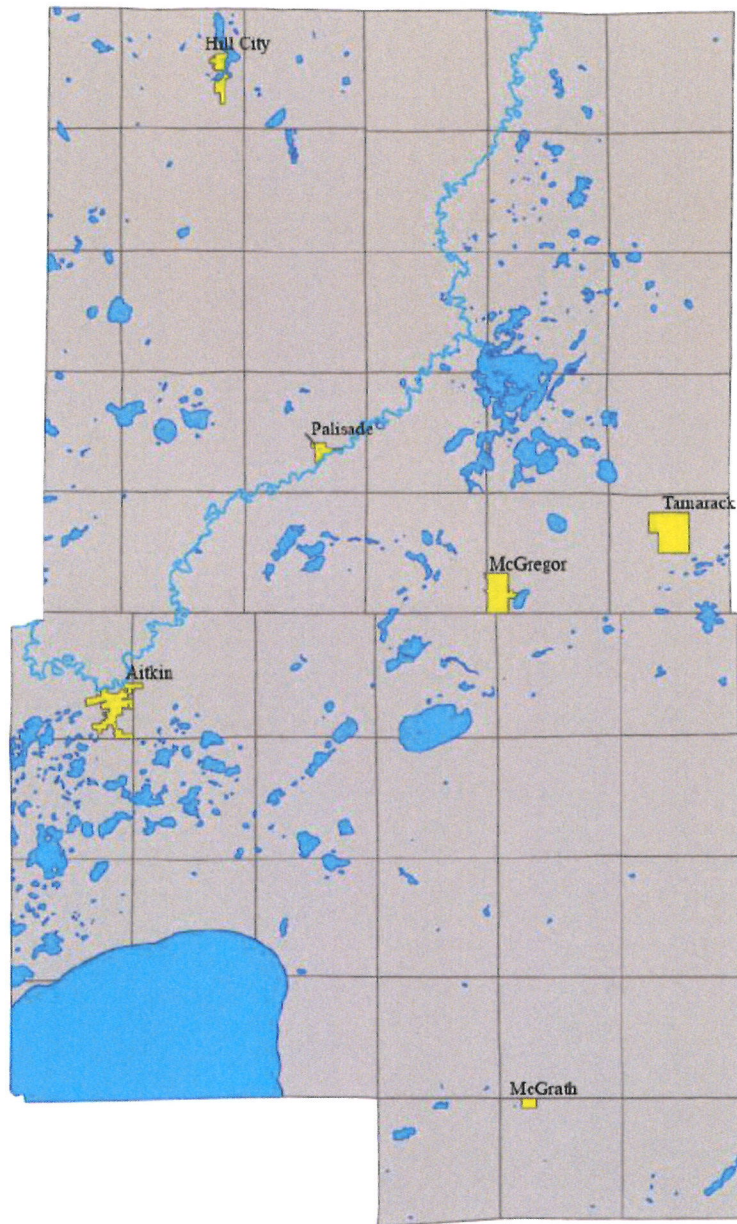
Aitkin <https://www.aitkin.com/>

McGregor <https://www.mcgregormn.com/about-the-chamber/>

Location

The county seat is located approximately 28 miles from Brainerd, 53 miles from Grand Rapids, 85 miles from Duluth, and 125 miles from Minneapolis.





Apply today!

<https://aitkincounty.applicantstack.com/x/detail/a2on7moabn67>

We're happy to answer any questions—even before the interviews. Got a question?

Just ask! 218-927-7306 or HR@aitkincountymn.gov